

A stylized map of the Chittagong region is depicted in the background. The landmasses are shown in a solid green color, while the surrounding water bodies, including the Bay of Bengal and the Chittagong Bay, are colored in a solid blue. The map highlights the coastline and major river systems of the area.

A HISTORY OF CHITTAGONG

VOL. I

DR SUNITI BHUSHAN QANUNGO

A HISTORY OF CHITTAGONG

VOLUME ONE

(From Ancient Times down to 1761)

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**THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO
THE PEOPLE OF CHITTAGONG**

A HISTORY OF CHITTAGONG

VOLUME ONE

P R E F A C E

I

The systematic study of local history is comparatively recent in our country. Most of the Bengalee historians of varying eminence devoted their attention to the study of the various aspects of history of Bengal and as such the study of local history did not receive appropriate care in their hands. It has now generally been agreed that without proper study of the local history no correct study of the national history is possible. Again, the local history though undoubtedly a part of national history, has its own characteristic political, economic, social and religious elements. A local historian should take notice of these characteristic elements. The present work is an humble attempt to make a systematic study of the history of an important district of Bangladesh.

Upto this time, the study of local history of Chittagong is primarily confined among the amateurs and antiquarians. Maulvi Hamidullah Khan Bahadur not only wrote the first history of Chittagong but prepares a way for others to follow. His efforts must be respectfully remembered at the beginning. Since the writing of *Tarikh* in the mid nineteenth century, a number of works on the history of Chittagong have been written by such enthusiastic writers as Shri Tarak Chandra Das, Shri Purna Chandra Chowdhury, Mr Abdul Karim Sahitya Visharad, Mr Mahbubul Alam, Syed Murtaza Ali, Mr Abdul Hoque Chowdhury, whose efforts must be acknowledged with due respect. As none of them is a professional historian, so a critical analysis of the historical events cannot be expected from their works. Nevertheless, their works are very

II | A History of Chittagong

helpful in preparing a ground for a more systematic history. The eminent historian Dr Kalika Ranjan Qanungo planned to write 'a decent history of his native district', but the history of the Afghans, Rajputs, Jaths, Marathas and Mughals made him so very busy that he found no time to materialise his plan and he assigned this stupendous task to his unworthy nephew, the present writer. Similarly, the research work on political and social history of Bengal prevented Dr Abdul Karim, a front rank historian of our time, from becoming an exclusive historian of Chittagong. Fortunately for me, he was appointed by the university of Chittagong my guide. But for his able and most sympathetic guidance it would have been impossible for me to make my research work fruitful.

It was a fine winter morning of 1962, when the present writer received a letter from his revered uncle Dr Kalika Ranjan Qanungo, directing him to undertake a research project concerning the history of Chittagong under Muslim rule. It was really a surprise to a man who had no experience in research work till then, and who informed the renowned scholar of his unworthiness to undertake this project. "Don't fear, go ahead. ... Investigate the subject with genuine curiosity. ... You should have a child like curiosity and a critical insight of a Thucydides. ... Your main requirements are a clear head and commonsense.... Don't worry too much about materials. The materials of history lie scattered everywhere if you have eyes to see and ears to hear..." These are a few lines of my uncle's inspiring advice given occasionally to me. I have been not only blessed with his valuable suggestions but favoured by him to have an opportunity of utilising the material already collected by him. But the cruel hand of Death snatched away my uncle allowing him no time to know officially that his project has earned a doctoral degree for his nephew.

II

Regarding the history of Chittagong lots of things have been

written so far, but a great part of these are not worthy of discussion. Nevertheless, the descriptive accounts written by some eminent scholars are of much worth and the present writer has tried to estimate their value. The contributions in the shape of articles in some noted journals by such scholars and researchers as Rai Sarat Chandra Das Bahadur, Dr Beni Madhab Barua, Dr Ahmad Hasan Dani, Dr Abdul Karim, Dr Abdur Rahim, Dr Ahmad Sharif, Dr Dinesh Chandra Sarkar, Dr Alamgir Sarajuddin have been very helpful for historical research on Chittagong. There are several other learned persons whose investigations have made my task easier. I have mentioned their names and their works in the footnotes and in the bibliography at the end of the book. My indebtedness to them knows no bounds.

III

Writing a systematic history of a district like Chittagong is in no way an enviable job. The writer has to face many problems. The major problem that faces a writer is the acute dearth of source material for which to give a critical and connective study of events is almost impossible. Epigraphic and numismatic evidences are so few that it is almost impossible to arrange all events chronologically or to furnish all events with dates. Besides, the primary source books give only some passing references to Chittagong while they are narrating the history or account of the countries, events or persons concerned. Because of the geographical situation, Chittagong formed merely an outlying province of its suzerain powers i.e. Tripura, Arakan and Bengal. Naturally, the court historians of the suzerain countries did not pay much attention to Chittagong. This acute shortage of source material may give rise to the suspicion that a continuous history of Chittagong cannot be written. This, however, cannot be accepted as a final judgement. History knows no vacuum and history must be derived from sources whatsoever cloudy and meagre that may be. For the history of the ancient period of Chittagong our primary

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source of information is the traditions as found in Tibetan and Arakanese chronicles. Information about Chittagong contained in these chronicles is often indirect, incomplete and in most cases these cannot be corroborated by other evidences. Nevertheless, these are the principal sources of information about early history of Chittagong.

From the sixteenth century the position regarding the availability of source material becomes comparatively favourable. In addition to the Arakanese and Tripura Chronicles, the accounts of a large number of foreign writers especially the Portuguese supply a lot of information about the contemporary happenings in the district. The Portuguese writers give a narrative of events, colourful lives of the Portuguese commanders and the various sides of the relation between the Portuguese and the native princes. The Portuguese sources may be classified into two groups. (I) Portuguese histories and chronicles dealing with the events from 1516 to 1580 A D. (II) Accounts of the Portuguese missionaries and travellers dealing with the events from 1580 to 1650 A D. Among the former group of the Portuguese writers, the names of such renowned historians as De Barros, Castanheda, Bocarro, Correa, Couto, Faria e Sousa are prominent. Among the writers of the second group the names of such distinguished missionaries as Father Guerreiro, Father Du Jarric, Father Manrique are noteworthy. Their accounts are so very valuable that sometimes these appear as chief source of history of their contemporary periods. Many of them like Father Manrique were well-acquainted with the languages, customs and social life of the people of the countries in which they travelled. The Portuguese sources lying scattered at the archives of Lisbon, Rome, Madrid and other European cities are not accessible to the present writer. However, some learned writers like Sir Henry Yule, Father H Hosten, C H Payne, J J A Campos, Danvers and others have done much to make the Portuguese sources available to us. Their edited works, however, deal with only a part of the vast source that the Portuguese chroniclers, correspondents, missionaries and travellers have left for us. In the seventeenth century, besides the European writers, some Persian works of admitted

merit, for example, *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, *Fathya-i-Ibbriya* and *Alamgirnama* throw ample light on the contemporary events in Chittagong. Bengali literary works profusely shed light on the social condition of the district especially during the Mughal regime. In spite of that, we must say all these source books are not sufficient to give a detailed, connective and comprehensive history of the district.

iv

Chittagong in the early Christian Centuries might form an independent kingdom, but it definitely ceased to be as such from the tenth century A D. Since that time, Chittagong is not indisputably known to have formed an independent kingdom. In fact, its history is but the history of a particular province of its suzerain powers such as Arakan, Tripura and Bengal. As a matter of fact, its history is so inextricably bound with the history of those countries that a study of history of this district without the knowledge of the history of the corresponding countries is neither practicable nor desirable. The history of Chittagong is so grossly blended with the history of its neighbouring regions that there is an ample scope of temptation for a writer to wander into the annals of those regions, which have no immediate connection with the subject of our study. The dearth of source material regarding the history of Chittagong aggravates the situation. The present writer has tried his best to restrict the study to the context of specific details and local occurrences as far as possible.

v

The book deals with the ancient and medieval periods of the history of Chittagong. It starts with a chapter on the description of land and people of the district in a very brief compass. The boundary of the district changed with the occurrences of political events especially conquests, so an attempt has been made to discuss the historical boundary of the district. Scholars and traditions have

put forward different theories regarding the naming of the district, which have been discussed in a separate section. The geographical situation of the district has greatly influenced the course of history and character of the people and therefore, a brief study of the influence of the geographical condition on the history and character of the people is added to this chapter.

In chapter two, an attempt has been made to give a brief survey of the history of Chittagong from the earliest times down to the Muslim conquest. Chittagong especially its hilly region is rich in primeval culture which is still evident in the social life of the tribesmen. It is regrettable to say that a thorough scientific investigation regarding the social life of the tribesmen of Chittagong Hill Tracts has not been taken up yet, though some progress has been made recently in this field by some reputed foreign scholars. The pre-Aryan culture in Chittagong can be traced in the dialects and placenames of the district. The Aryanization of the district began from the time of the introduction of Hinduism and Buddhism in the district. Scholars in our time have made an effort of identifying a number of deformed placenames mentioned in the writings of the classical writers of the West with their modern counterparts in the district. The relations between Chittagong and some notable kingdoms have been discussed in separate appendixes.

On account of the dearth of material, to draw a clear picture of the social life of ancient Chittagong is difficult. Literary and epigraphic evidences show that Chittagong was a stronghold of Buddhist Mahayanism and Hindu Tantricism. The *Tibetan Chronicles* give evidence that Chittagong was a notable centre of religion and learning. All these subjects have been discussed in chapter three.

The Arab contact with Chittagong goes as far back as the ninth century A D. The establishment of an independent Arab colonial settlement in the district is not free of doubt, but the trade and cultural relation between Chittagong and the Arab countries is proved by facts and it is far more significant than its political

aspects. The present writer examines these aspects in greater detail in chapter four.

The next chapter is devoted to the first Muslim conquest by Sultan Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah. The Muslim conquest brought new government new people, new religion, new language in this region, which moulded the society in a new form. Ibn Battuta's *Sadkawan* which has been identified with Chittagong by such reputed scholars as Sir H Yule and Dr N K Bhattasali and which has been confused by some writers to be Satgaon has presently been identified with Chittagong with stronger arguments.

Chapter six deals with the Ilyas Shahi sultan's rule over the district which from that time became a part of the Muslim kingdom of Bengal. An attempt has been made to answer the problem how Raja Ganesh and his successors could claim Chittagong as part of their territory. There are definite proofs showing the authority of the restored Ilyas Shahi sultans extending over the district.

Chapter seven provides a treatment of the history of Chittagong under Husain Shahi dynasty. The *Tripura Chronicle* gives reference to a stubborn fight between Husain Shah and Dhanyamanikya for lordship over Chittagong. Though the Bengal army suffered repeated setbacks at the hands of the Tripuras, the Bengal sultan ultimately gained success and placed it under strict surveillance. The reliability of the *Rajamala* with regard to this matter can be called in question only when fresh material is discovered. Fortunately for us, the accounts of the Portuguese writers throw ample light on the political condition of the district in the latter part of the Husain Shahi dynasty.

The sturdy and warlike race of the Afghans had once held sway over Bengal. Their authority extended not only upto Chittagong but as far south as Arakan. Though the attack by the Tripuras from the north, the Arakanese from the south and the Portuguese from the coast made their position in Chittagong extremely precarious, yet they fought against all opponents to hold

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the district under their rule even when the aid from the centre was stopped. Chapter eight incorporates the complicated political history of Chittagong from 1538 to 1580 A D into a chronological framework.

The important traits of different branches of administration during the sultanate period based on available sources has been briefly discussed in chapter nine.

The Portuguese started haunting of this part of the country during the first quarter of the sixteenth century. Unfortunately, their political role is marked by piratical activities. It was not before the closing years of the rule of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah that they received trade concessions and territorial facilities in Chittagong port. But under the subsequent regimes, all these privileges were withdrawn. Chapter ten is devoted to their activities in Chittagong from 1516 to 1580 A D.

The relation between Chittagong and Burma especially its subject province Arakan is as old as the history of the district. The repeated Arakanese aggressions in the district undoubtedly influenced the course of its history. From the late sixteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century Chittagong was under the long and almost continuous rule of the Arakanese kings. The fruitless attempts of the Tripuras as well as the Mughals to conquer Chittagong during the Arakanese rule have been discussed. Some aspects of the Arakanese administration have been reviewed. Though Chittagong was politically a part of the Arakanese kingdom, culturally it remained a part of Bengal. The Arakanese rulers in spite of their belief in Buddhism, not only patronized both the Hindu and Muslim cultures but also encouraged the settlement of these peoples in the kingdom. The legacy of the Arakanese occupation in Chittagong has also been discussed with new light. Chapter eleven is provided with all these and other subjects such as Prince Shuja's sojourn in Chittagong and Father Manrique's journey from Chittagong to Arakan.

The Portuguese activities in Chittagong developed intensity during the Arakanese rule. The political side of their activities

chiefly centres on the conflict between the Arakanese rulers and the Portuguese commanders. In the first quarter of the seventeenth century they organized themselves into a powerful band and founded an independent kingdom in Sandwip and in the thirties of that century they gained territorial concession in the mainland in exchange of their promised services to the Arakanese authorities. During this time, Chittagong earned notoriety as a centre of slave hunting expeditions and slave trade in which they took a leading part. Their colonial settlements and manners and morals are also discussed in chapter twelve. In the maps and historical works of the Portuguese writers, a place named City of Bengala is mentioned. The present writer discusses the subject which leads to the conclusion that Chittagong along with its suburb Diang was called by the Portuguese as Cidade de Bengala.

Chapter thirteen opens with the conquest of Chittagong by the Mughals. For this memorable event the two source books namely *Fathya-i-ibbriya* and *Alamgirnama* exclusively supply the details. Since the history of Chittagong merged in the history of Bengal hereafter, only the characteristic traits of the Mughal rule in Chittagong have been discussed in this chapter. The English acquisition of Diwani in 1761 A D practically ended the Mughal rule in Chittagong. The revenue history of Chittagong has its own characteristics which have been discussed relying on the available source material. A note on the Hazari landlords of Chittagong and the list of the Mughal officers given in Maulvi Hamidullah Khan's *Tarikh i-Chatgam* have been added as appendixes to this chapter.

The social and cultural life of the people of Chittagong is no less important than the political one. In fact, the growth of society and culture and the factors involved in it are more significant than the political events. Chapter fourteen includes a brief survey of social history especially during the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century. The source material for a study of the social life during the sultanate period is so scant that this does not permit us to give a comprehensive picture of social life during that time. The precarious political condition

resulted by wars and invasions must have deeply affected the social life of the people. For reconstructing a picture of social life in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the position with regard to a study of social life is somewhat better but the available data are so insufficient that the present writer had to depend on the later sources. It will not be far from the truth to say that the structure of society and the pattern of social life, especially of the common people, do not vary much in the period between the second half of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century even if the long span of time is taken to consideration. Rural folk in all ages and climes are conservative and the rural life is slow to adopt new situations. A large majority of the rural folk in our time are still overwhelmingly medieval in their beliefs and in their observance of rites. A close investigation of the present day daily life and beliefs of the common people will reveal that many of the rites, beliefs and ways of thinking originated in the medieval or even earlier period. The present writer has tried his best to reveal the richness and variety of social life especially during the Mughal period.

Chapter fifteen deals with the development of Bengali literature in Arakan-Chittagong region. It is noticeable that a remote area like Chittagong, which is surrounded by non-Bengalee peoples became a dominant centre of the cultivation of Bengali language and literature in medieval times. The pursuit of literary activities which came down from a remote period was successfully maintained by local poets during the sultanate and the Arakanese periods and reached its culmination in the Mughal period.

Architecture is the most important material evidence of practical skills, technological development and the sentiment of the people. Chittagong, especially its northern part, is rich in medieval architectural remains. Chapter sixteen is devoted to a brief study of architectural activities in medieval Chittagong.

A study of economic condition is relevant to an understanding of the social life of the people and the last chapter is

devoted to the various aspects of the economic condition of the district during the medieval period. A brief description of the medieval places of Chittagong and the medieval city of Chittagong has been added to this chapter as appendixes.

VI

It cannot be denied that the history of Chittagong centres on the port town of Chittagong, which is the nerve centre of the district. The port town of Chittagong was "the gateway to Bengal" under the sultanate and "the masterkey of the whole of the Magh Empire" under the Arakanese regime. But this is not the whole picture. Often in history, the district was divided between the Arakanese and the Bengal kings and such an event undoubtedly robbed the port town of much of its importance as a centre of political actions. As Chittagong port town was exposed to the danger of the Arakanese incursions from the south and the Portuguese plundering from the coast, the governors during the sultanate period felt it a necessity of shifting their seat of administration farther interior of the district. During the Arakanese regime Ramu claimed to be the principal seat of administration as good as Chittagong. Nevertheless, the port town of Chittagong was a place much more important than any other place in Chittagong.

VII

One of the distinctive features of the history of Chittagong is that it was the battleground of the neighbouring ambitious monarchs. In the ancient period, Chittagong was a victim of aggressive designs of the kings of south eastern Bengal and Arakan. In the medieval period, the Bengal sultans, the Arakanese kings and the Tripura rajas each of whom wanted to be the master of Chittagong and frequently engaged themselves in deadly wars one with another. This tripartite struggle for supremacy over the district virtually turned it to a 'cockpit' of medieval

Bengal. The Portuguese incursions aggravated the situation. These wars and turmoils gave rise to the confused situation which had far-reaching effects on the political social and economic condition of the district.

VIII

Another important thing that attracts our attention is that the district is the meeting ground of various races and nationalities, each of which leaves a mark on the evolution of society. Originally a land of animistic tribesmen, Chittagong attracted the Hindu Buddhist settlers from northern India and Mongoloid people from Burma. The Muslim Arabs and Persians and the Christian Portuguese used to visit Chittagong in connexion with trade and commerce and in many cases they made it their place of settlement. The martial races like the central Asians and the Afghans came to Chittagong either as soldiers or as government officials. As a matter of fact, Chittagong became a meeting ground of conflicting races, religions and nationalities. The opposing cultures finally gave birth to a homogeneous one. In fact, Chittagong as it stands today is not only geographically a compact area but culturally and linguistically it belongs to what is known as "Chattagrami."

IX

The book, originally a doctoral dissertation, is written in quite a different form so as to suit the need of scholars as well as to satisfy the thirst for knowledge of the general readers. On occasions, the readers may not agree to the opinions expressed by the author and the conclusions arrived at by him. In many cases assumptions are drawn from single evidence, the reliability of which is exposed to challenge. In the second place, generalisations have on many occasions been based on the statements and opinions of the scholars, though it is true that 'mere opinion' can never be a good evidence. The assumptions of the historians are subject

to the change, resulted from the discovery of new material and the progress of study. The present writer has no doubt that his assumptions and conclusions, in most cases, are tentative and they are based on known facts only. In spite of much caution various types of error especially printing mistakes have cropped up throughout the book. A corrigendum has been added to minimise the annoyance of the reader.

X

In the preface, selected bibliography, footnotes and text I have mentioned the learned authors to whom I am deeply grateful for information and opinions. For many helpful suggestions about the improvement of the dissertation I am particularly indebted to such eminent scholars as late Dr Mahmud Husain of the University of Karachi, Dr Peter Hardy of the University of London, Dr Ahmad Hasan Dani of the University of Peshawar and Late Dr Mafizullah Kabir of the University of Dhaka all of them were examiners of the thesis. Grateful acknowledgement is due to the authors and the publishers of their works, which I have utilised in my book. I am deeply indebted to Sri Pulin behari Qanungo, my father, who pointed out many valuable suggestions regarding the composition of the theme, and to Dr Sukriti bhushan Qanungo, my younger brother, who supplied some valuable materials from foreign libraries. Besides, I have no words to reveal my gratitude to scores of people with whom I came in contact and who helped me in various ways during my field work. I am also thankful to my students, colleagues, relatives, university authorities and learned acquaintances, who took a keen interest in my work and whose encouragement has always been a source of inspiration to me throughout my tiresome course of study.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Ain. Ain-i-Akbari

AN (Riyaz). Alamgirnama, qt Abdus Salam in the Riyaz

AN (Studies). Alamgirnama, qt J N Sarkar in the Studies

Analysis. Analysis of the Finances of Bengal by James Grant, published as an appendix in the Fifth Report, II

A R. Asiatic Researches

A R B S. Arakan Rajsabhay Bangla Sahitya

A S I. Archaeological Survey of India

Baharistan. Baharistan-i-Ghaibi by Mirza Nathan

B A P. Bangla Academy Patrika

Barbosa. The Book of Barbosa by Duarte Barbosa

Bernier. Travels in the Mogul Empire by Francois Bernier

B P C. Bengal Public Consultation

B P P. Bengal Past and Present

B P P V. Bangla Prachin Puthir Vibaran

B S I. Bangla Sahityer Itihas by Sukumar Sen

B S P P. Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Patrika

Castanheda. Historia do Descobrimento e Conquisito da India pelos Portugueses by Da Castanheda

C B. Chaitanya Bhagavata

C C. Chaitanya Charitamrita

Corpus. Corpus of the Muslim Coins of Bengal by Abdul Karim

C R. Calcutta Review

De Barros. Decade da Asia by Joao De Barros

D U L. Dhaka University Library

E D. History of India as told by its own Historians, ed. H M Elliot and J Dowson

E F I. English Factories in India

E I. Epigraphia Indica

Fathya. Fathya-i-ibbriya, qt J N Sarkar, Studies

Fifth Report. Fifth Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company, ed. W K Firminger

Guerreiro. The Relations by Father Guerreiro, qt C H Payne, Jahangir and the Jesuits

H B I. History of Bengal, vol. i, publ. Dacca University

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- H B II.* *History of Bengal*, vol. ii, publ. Dacca University
H J. *Hobson-Jobson*
I A. *Indian Antiquary*
Ibn Battuta. *Travels in Asia and Africa* by Ibn Battuta
I H Q. *Indian Historical Quarterly*
J A S B. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*
J A S B D. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*
J A S P. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*
J B R S. *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*
J B T R S. *Journal of the Buddhist Text and Research Society*
J Bur R S. *Journal of the Burma Research Society*
J P H S. *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*
J R A S. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
J R A S B. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*
Laval. *The Voyage of Pyrrard de Laval*
Linschoten. *The Voyage of Linschoten*, qt *Purchas* vol. X
Manrique. *Travels of Father Sebastian Manrique*
Manucci. *Storia do Mogor*, by Niccolao Manucci
Memorandum. *Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong* by
H G S Cotton
M A B. *Muslim Architecture in Bengal* by Ahmad Hasan Dani
M R. *Modern Review*
P B G. *Purba Banga Gitika*, ed Pinesh Chandra Sen
P P. *Puthi Pari hiti* ed Ahmad Sharif
Purchas. *Purchas His Pilgrims*
Rajamala. *Sri Rajamala or the Tripura Chronicle*
Riyaz. *Riyaz us Salatin* ed. Abdus Salam
Seir. *Seir-ul-Mutakherin*
Social History. *Social History of Muslims in Bengal* by Abdul Karim
S P. *Sahitya Patrika*
Survey Report. *Final Report of the Survey and Settlement of the District of Chittagong* by C G H Allen
Studies. *Studies in Aurangzib's Reign* by Jadu Nath Sarkar
Tarikh. *Tarikh i-Chatgam* by Hamidullah Khan Bahadur
V B A. *Visva Bharati Annals*

CHAPTER 1

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Section 1. Geography and Configuration

The district of Chittagong is the southernmost district of Bangladesh, situated between 20°35' and 22°59' north latitude, and 91°27' east longitude, comprising an area of 2705 sq. miles.¹ It is bounded on the north by the Feni River, which marks off the boundary of Chittagong from the adjoining district of Noakhali and Tripura Hills; on the south, it is separated from Arakan by mountain ranges and the bend of the Naf River on which stands the town of Teknaf. The valley of Chittagong is cooped up between the outer spurs of the Blue Mountains on the east and the waters of the Bay of Bengal on the west; its length from Ramgarh on the north to the mouth of the Naf River is about 166 miles, and its extreme breadth is only 26 miles diminishing and increasing within this limit according to its physical configuration. The district of Chittagong, as we have it on the authority of O'Malley, comprises three hill ranges and four broad valleys intersected by them. The hill ranges arrange themselves in parallel lines occasionally sending off spurs into the adjacent valleys. The most westerly

¹ The geographical data followed in this section are largely drawn from, L S S O'Malley, *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers : Chittagong*, p.p. 3—5.

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of these ranges contains the Maheshkhali, Cox's Bazar and Teknaf Hills. The central range forms the Ramgarh, Sitakunda and Chittagong City Hills; and proceeding southward is successively named the Diang, Banskhalī and Garjania Range, which is the most important of the three, traversing the whole district from end to end. The eastern range of hills invariably forms the district boundary in a straggling manner. It enters the district near Fatikchhari U. Z. and moves southward throwing spurs of hillocks indented into plains along the line of Mahamuni-Karaldenga, Patiya-Satkania and Jaldi-Harbang Hills, till it merges back into Chittagong Hill Tracts. These hill ranges enclose plains of varying size, which communicate with each other by rugged mountain passes and rivers.

Four main rivers and innumerable hill streams demarcate natural divisions of the district. On the extreme north the Feni River marks the historic northern boundary of the district from the Muslim period, if not earlier, down to the present day. Almost all the medieval sources that have reference to this river rightly call it the Fani (serpent) River perhaps on account of its serpentine course as well as its destructive and treacherous nature giving no peace to the inhabitants of its valley.

The Karnaphuli,¹ the largest and the longest river of the district flows from its watershed in the Blue Mountain right into

¹ The name Karnaphuli literally means earflower, which is worn by the ladies in the lobe of ear for ornament (O'Malley, *op. cit.*, p.8). The practice is very old but it is current even today. The river is called the Kynsa Khyoung or the Kynsa River by the hillmen inhabiting in its upper valley, (*Ibid.*, p. 7). It is popularly called Kaincha Khal from which term, according to poet Muqim, the word Karnaphuli, derives. ('কাইছা হইতে নিঃসরিছে কণ্‌ফুলী নাম'—Muqim, 'Gul-e Bakawali', qt, *Puthi Parichiti* ed. A Sharif, p.97). It seems that Kaincha Khal, sometimes called Kainchar Khal, is the Bengali

the sea and forms the highway of communication with Chittagong Hill Tracts. The town and the harbour of Chittagong are on the right bank of the river, and the once Portuguese settled town of the cidade de Dianga, on the site of the modern village of Diang stood almost opposite to the left bank. The river stands in the same position in the district as the river St. Lawrence in Canada or the river Seine in France. The importance of the river can only be judged in the light of the history of the district. Had there not been the Karnaphuli, the port town of Chittagong would not have come into existence and its chequered history would have been

version of the hillmen's Kynsa Khyoung. The European writers from Joao De Barros (1550) to Walter Hamilton (1820) write its name Chittagong River. The river is mentioned in the *Puranas* and Tantrik works. In some of these works the word is pronounced as Karnaphuli. In the *Bhuvana Cosa*, it is declared that it is so called, because there Karma, or good works do blossom and flourish most luxuriantly so as to produce fruit most abundantly." (*Asiatic Researches*, XIV (1822), 444). A passage in the *Bhavishya Purana*, reads as follows :

কর্ণফুলা নদীতঃ স্নানমাদ্যেন প্রাপিনাং।
 বিকাশতে কমতে জো বদ্ধতে চ দিনে দিনে।।
 কাতিকে কর্ণফুলান্নাং মঞ্জরিস্থিত্তি যে জনা :
 ব্রহ্মহত্যা যতাবাপি ঘাস্যন্তি স্নকৃতাং পদং।।

—*Bhavishya Purana, Brahmakhanda. Ch. XIV.*

Arab writers do not mention the name of the river and so the derivation of its present name from the Arabic word Qaranful (clove) as tradition (vide Mv Abdul Karim Sahitya Visharad, *Islamabad*, p. 7) would have us believe, is unreliable. Mention of the name Karnaphuli in the *Rajamala*, *Fathya-i-Ibbriya* and *Laili Majnu* indicates that the name of the river was current as early as the sixteenth century or earlier.

written in different form. The Halda¹ is its most important tributary noted for its zigzag course. The Sankha² is next to the Karnaphuli in size and importance. Ordinarily, it is rather a shallow river at the dry season except at tide. It is fed by several tributaries such as Dhopachhari, Dolokhal, Shrimati and Chandkhali. Dohazari is the only important place on the right bank of the river.

The Matamuhuri³ farther south, has made an extensive and fertile delta at its mouth almost silted up at present. Important place on its lower reach is Chakaria, the capital of the Magh principality 'Kingdom of Chocoria' of Portuguese account. The Bak-khali, so called perhaps from its numerous baks or bends, has an importance of its own from ancient times. Ramu, once the capital of a flourishing principality and the cradle of Buddhist culture, stands on its bank forlorn of its former glory. The Naf is rather an elongated estuary than a river dividing Bangladesh from Burma. It serves as the natural boundary and herein lies its importance.

The district contains a long coastline, which plays a significant rôle in the history of the district. It not only furnishes ports and harbours but brought traders as well as pirates in the medieval period. The coastline of northern Chittagong is low and

¹ Rennell in his map marks it as Havildar River (vide Rennell's Map, sheet no. 1). Poet Muqim mentions the river by name Haolda. (p. p. p.98).

² The river is known to the hill people as Rigray Khyoung and Sabak Khyoung (O' Malley, *op cit.*, p.8). O'Malley correctly says that Sangu is the Bengalised form of the Magh name Sabak Khyoung, afterwards turned by pundits into Sankha (couch shell).

³ The present name, according to O'Malley (*op. cit.*, p.9) is the Bengali version of the Magh name Mamuri. It may have etymological relation to river Muhuri in Tripura.

flat. The middle coastline is irregular in form and contains shoals, offshore bars, and numerous estuaries; as it extends south east it becomes more rugged. Travel by water along the central Chittagong coast is so hazardous that mariners from the days of the Arabs and Portuguese fear the tides colliding above an uneven oceanfloor. A fine beach is a rare asset and the long sea beach of Cox's Bazar District can rank among the best in the world. In Cox's Bazar coast it is really enjoyable to see the huge waves majestically driving millions of gallons of water up the dozens of off-shore islands and lather the narrow strip of silvery beach of the mainland.

The district of Chittagong includes some islands of varying size along its coastline. The largest of these islands is Sandwip off the mouth of the Meghna. It was a paradise of pirates, the Magh and the Portuguese, in medieval times. Outubdia a popular health resort, is thirteen miles in length and hardly more than three miles in width. Maheshkhali Island with its temple of Adinath has an area of 120 sq. miles. It was originally a part of the mainland cut off later by the sea, as the hill of Adinath 288 feet above the sea level indicates. The turbulent Bay of Bengal rules the destiny of these islands as well as of the mainland, subjected to periodical cyclones¹ of devastating character.

¹ A vivid description of 'Touffon' (Tufan or cyclone) in this part of the Bay of Bengal can be read in the travelling accounts of Caesar Fredericke, who experienced it near Sandwip in or around 1569 A.D. For the English translation of the relevant portion see Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrims*, X, 135—36. Manucci also gives a graphic account of the tidal bore along the coast of the kingdom of Arakan. (Nicolao Manucci, *Storia de Mogor*, trans. W. Irvine, I, 371).

"Owing to the variety of conditions", remarks O' Malley, "the vegetation of Chittagong is extremely rich and diversified".¹ The rich timber resource in the evergreen forests of Chittagong has helped the growth of shipping industry in the port area since the sixteenth century, if not earlier. The reputation of Chittagong timber reached the courts of the rulers of Constantinople who found it cheaper to build ships in Chittagong than in Alexandria.²

The district is wonderfully rich in bird and animal life. The elephant was one of the chief articles of export during the seventeenth Century. Manrique reports that the district abounded with "wild animals", such as "tigers, rhinoceros and fierce elephants" with whom he had to encounter on a number of occasions during his journey from Deang to Arakan in 1630 A. D.³ His book of Travels refers to "fierce crocodiles" which "had at times upset small craft to seize their crews, and so fill their voracious stomachs"⁴ According to the author of the *Riyaz*, "the fighting cocks of that (Chittagong) are well known".⁵ Noticing the richness and diversification of plant and animal life in Chittagong, Sir William Jones admirably describes the district (in 1786 A. D.) as a "noble field for a naturalist".⁶

The climate of the district varies. In the hilly upazillahs of the interior is colder than it is in the coastal upazillahs. The hot season of the year is greatly modified by the contiguity of ocean and the position of hills within. This is an excellent arrangement made by nature, "favourable for the free play of land and sea breezes."⁷

¹ O, Malley, *op. cit.*, p.11.

² J J A Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, p. 119.

³ Sebastian Manrique, *Travels*, trans. Luard and Hosten, 1, 96.

⁴ *Ibid.*, P. 296

⁵ Ghulam Husain Sallim, *Riyazus Salatin* trans. Mv. Abdus Salam, p.41

⁶ *Hobson-Jobson*, ed. H Yule and A C Burnell, p. 204

⁷ O 'Malley, *op, cit*, p. 16

In Hamilton's *Hindustan* it is stated that "this maritime tract is much resorted to by the European inhabitants of Bengal, on account of the beneficial effects experienced from the sea air and the salt water bathing."¹ "Chittagong was a favourite health resort in the days of Warren Hastings and Sir William Jones, the latter build a residence there."² Fr Barbier while visiting Chittagong in 1713 AD praises the district for its climate. He writes, "On account of the goodness of the climate, where it is rare that one falls ill."³ But the cyclonic storms and violent tidal bores combine to produce the most destructive disturbances on the district. Sometimes, they develop into such a great fury that they take heavy toll of human lives and inflict immeasurable damage on properties ⁴

The geographical position made the district a unique place of natural scenery. According to Taranath, "the country to the south of Tripura and north of Rakhan (Arakan) was Ramma (Sans. ramya) the land of the picturesque sceneries."⁵ The spectacular landscape of Chittagong so much charmed a Portuguese missionary traveller (1639—40) with such delight that we cannot resist us from quoting a few lines of his joyous descriptions of "several objects of great interest and well-worth noticing," through which he had to pass. So runs the narration :

¹ Walter Hamilton, *A Geographical, Statistical, and Historical Description of Hindostan*, I, 169

² O, Malley, *op. cit.*, p. 179

³ *Bengal Past and Present*, VI (1910), 206

⁴ The worst types of this calamity in the recent period are recorded on June 3, 1795; Nov. 1797 ; June 2, 1823 ; June 8, 1824, May 11, 1844 ; 1858; Oct. 1872 ; Oct. 31, 1876 ; Oct. 24, 1897 ; Nov. 1904 ; Oct. 10 and 31, 1960 ; May 29, 1963 ; Nov. 1970.

⁵ *J A S B*, LXVII (1898), 24

Inland the mountains seen to touch the skies ; here and there great chasms and clefts appear, and valleys deep and cool ; dense forests with endless varieties of trees clothe the sides of the mountains ; squirrels gambol in the foliage to the great delight of the traveller ; little birds chirp and whistle so agreeably that it is a pleasure to see and hear them. One cannot but raise one's eyes to look at the songsters ; one cannot but listen to the sweet melody which they pour forth to praise their Creator...In the flanks, of these hills, at different heights, we see caves, some small, others so deep that they fill the heart with awe and astonishment. And whilst the heart is overcome by these 'feellings, we hear the gentle murmur of the water percolating through the cracks in the stone, and the harmonious sound produced by its dripping along the vaults of the caves..."¹

Our Portuguese traveller is not the only person who was thus fascinated by the scenic beauty of the landscape of Chittagong. People of different climes have been drawn to the grave majesties of this land of spectacular combination of hills, rivers and ocean.

The natural features of Chittagong present a charming spectacle. The picturesque mountain peaks breaking into the blue sky, the blooming hills lined by evergreen deciduous forests, the smiling valleys forming the fertile fields of luxuriant crops, the shimmering silver of the winding rivers, the long sea beaches surfed by gigantic waves, the multicoloured clouds of magnificent sunset sky in summer and autumn—everything of Chittagong is so charming as to make it an irresistible attraction for nature lovers. History may be a dry subject of wars and intrigues, treaties and their violations, killings and conquests and a historian may be a die-hard judge of events to whom the scenic beauty of earth may not have special appeal, but the poets and teachers like Joao Camoes,

¹ Father A Farinha S J qt *Manrique*, I, 173—74

William Jones, Nabin Chandra Sen, Qazi Nazrul and a host of lovers of nature became jubilant at the sight of hills, valleys and ocean of Chittagong, and they did not fail to demonstrate their joy in their works.

The district, especially its coastal portion has undergone great seismic changes even in the historic period. Earthquakes,¹ heavy rainfall, tidal bore, ocean currents, smashing seawaves are some of the agencies of nature that are constantly shaping and reshaping the interior and the littoral parts of the district.² This is the reason why the places mentioned in the European cartography and in the narratives of Sidi Chelebi have undergone such drastic changes in our time. The process is still going on though imperceptible to the unscientific eye.

¹ One of the most terrible earthquakes that occurred in recent time is the earthquake of April 2, 1762 which caused a permanent submergence of sixty sq. miles near Chittagong (vide O'Malley, *op cit.*, p.10)

² This work of nature along the Chittagong coast has been graphically described by a Portuguese missionary traveller (1639-40) as follows: "There are some very high red barriers; these, although built in the shape of arches and of mud, and although, battered for centuries by the waves of the sea, endure to this day, as a warning to ships not to approach the reefs hidden in the vicinity. There is, too the famous hill called "the head of the Horse", (Manrique speaks of the shipwreck of Ignatius Gomes (1608) at "Horse's Head in ch. XXIX) an immense rock, a natural landmark, which is described from a far by all who navigate in those parts. There are also many other hills composed of craggy rocks, some more solid, others crumbling slowly under the combined influence of the terrific gales and of the furious onslaught of the waves. In some places, the scattered fragments of those rocks lead one to think of strong fortresses battered and demo-

Section 2, Historical Boundary

The boundary of modern Chittagong is demarcated by the river Feni in the north, hill ranges in the east, ocean in the west and the river Naf in the south, thus making the district more or less a geographical compacted unit. Thus, whereas in our time the natural boundary consists of rivers, hills, and ocean, in the ancient and medieval periods conquests and forceful occupation of territories determined the boundary line of the occupying kingdoms. As the district was a disputed possession between the Bengal and the Burmese rulers, so a fixed boundary of the district cannot be determined in ancient and medieval times.

Chittagong might constitute one or more administrative units under the kingdoms of Samatata, Harikela, Tripura, Arakan and Bengal in different periods of its history. In fact, prior to the time of the official records of Todar Mall no clear evidence is available regarding either the political boundary or the descriptive accounts, of the district. Taranath mentions Chittagong as parts of Bangala and Kokiland¹ during the very early time of its history. He further states that about the time of the Palas, Chatigrama was known as Ramma or Ramyabhumi.² "To the south of Chatigrama" according to Taranath, "was the kingdom of Rakhan or Arakan."³

lished by the discharges of heavy artillery.....what might be mistaken for cannon balls-stones rounded as if in a mould, and polished by the incessant action of the waves. Elsewhere, we perceive immense basins cut in the rocks, not with a pickaxe, but by the ceaseless dashing of the surf" (Farinha, *qt Manrique*, I, 173).

¹ S C Das, "Antiquities of Chittagong", J A S B, IXVII (1898) 20ff,

² *Ibid*, p. 24

³ *Ibid*, p. 22

Atisha's (c. 982—c. 1054) *Namthor* refers to "a place called Chandilah gram situated in the border of Bangala" where the great monk scholar stayed for sometime.¹ This Chandilah gram of the Tibetan source agrees to a place named Chandilah in an Arakanese temple inscription engraved in 1540—41 A D. In the ancient and early medieval periods the Karnaphuli was from time to time regarded as a boundray river separating the Bengal held and the Arakanese held territories. The local medieval scholars and poets like Acharya Jatadhar, Srikar Nandi, Kavindra Parameswar mention the river Feni as the northern boundary of the district under the rule of the early sultanate. According to the contemporary Portuguese chroniclers, Chittagong Hill Tracts and a portion of Arakan were included in the kingdom of the Husain Shahi rulers. The boundary of the province of Chittagong greatly fluctuates during the Pathan period. Though Sultan Muhammad Khan Sur carried his victorious campaign even upto Arakan proper, his successors could not claim the territory south of the Sankha as part of their dominions. The mid-sixteenth century Portuguese historical works and maps, the *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi* and Manrique's travelling accounts show no great change of the northern boundary of the district under the Arakanese occupation in the seventeenth century. The author of the *Fathya-i-ibbriya* writes that a forest was planted by the Arakanese rulers, south of the river Feni for the purpose of marking out the frontier.² This reminds us of the practice of the ancient Romans creating artificial bundary by planting forests. During the Arakanese rule, the province of Chittagong was subdivided into smaller units of which neither the number nor the location can be satisfactorily determined so far. The preeminent among those were the principalities of Chaigan (Chittagong) and Ramu. The

¹ *Journal of the Buddhist Text and Research Society*, vol. VII, part IV, 1905, p. 5

² Shihaduddin Talish, *Fathya-i-ibbriya*, trans. J.N. Sarkar, *Studies in Aurangjib's reign*, p. 182

seacoast in the west and the mountain ridge in the east have demarcated the natural boundary of the district since time immemorial. Thus, where the eastern, western and northern boundary of the district have been more or less defined by nature, the southern limit of the district had a shifting boundary. The fact is that, the southern boundary of Chittagong was demarcated by the neighbouring ambitious monarch. The place where he liked to put a halt to his authority was the boundary of his dominion.

In the *Ain-i-Akbari*, the place is named as Sarkar-e-Chatgaon under the Sube Bangala. The sarkar was constituted of seven mahals but the illustrious author of the *Ain* did not undertake further trouble to define geographical boundary of either the sarkar or its constituent mahals. The configuration of the district was somewhat different from what it is now. Talish defines Chatgaon on the eve of the Mughal conquest as "a tract adjacent to Bengal and Arakan alike."¹

It is only in 1722 A.D. that Nawab Jafar Khan (Murshid Quli Khan) in his Kam'il Jama' Tomari or 'Perfect Rent Roll' included Chatgaon as one of the well defined chaklahs in the sube Bangala. In the earlier stage of the Mughal rule the southern limit was the river Sankha. Since then a process of expansion was going on till it reached the present shape under the British rule. At the time of the cession of the district to the East India Company by the Mughal subahdar, "the Chittagong province extends to the southward as far as 21°—28°N. where Cruzcolly is the boundary between that and Arakan".²

The district of Chittagong, according to James Grant, Walter Hamilton, and W W Hunter contained about 2,987 sq. miles in

¹ Ibid.,

² *The Journals of Major James, Rennell* p. 78. Rennell's map shows Cruzcool River opposite to the Maishkhal Island just north of Cox's Bazar (see J Rennell, *A Bengal Atlas*, 1781, sheet Nos. I and IX),

1760.¹ This shows that the district was a little bigger than it is in our time. The reason is that at the time of the cession, a large part of modern Chittagong Hill Tracts was included in Chittagong. It was in 1860 that the new district of Chittagong Hill Tracts was formed, which received certain areas from Chittagong District. The latter, however, was compensated by the addition of Ramu, Ukhia and Taknaf U. zs. the descriptions of Rennell, Hamilton, and Hunter roughly correspond to the Mughal Sarkar of Chatgaon. We must express gratitude to Rennell for his narration and map giving an approximate idea of the shape and size of the sarkar of Chatgaon at the time of the end of the Mughal rule.

Section 3. Origin of the Name of 'Chittagong'

The origin of the name of Chittagong is controversial. This is because a thick mist envelops the early history of Chittagong, which remained almost a sealed book to India as well as Burma, though it had invariably been a bone of contention between the two countries. In modern times, legends and learning have been busy in solving the mystery of this name of the district and its indigenous people. People in general are content to believe that the earthen lamp (Chati) of their guardian saint, Pir Badr Shah, lighted on his first landing in this abode of jinns and fairies to scare them away, gave the name of Chatigaon to the territory of his spiritual sway.² Whether the pir lighted an earthen lamp or not, he certainly kindled the spiritual light of Islam in this land of heathenism. It may have been that he used to light a beacon-fire on the top

¹ Hamilton, *op. cit.* p. 167; W W Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, VI. 212; Hutchinson, *Chittagong Hill Tracts*, p. 9; *Fifth Report*, I, 494

² Mir Hamidullah Khan Bahadur Islamabadi, *Tarikh-i-Chatgam*, pp.27-28

of a hill to guide the sea-faring crew, who enjoyed his divine protection in the perils of the sea, which at one time surged past its foot hills.¹ With the discovery of widely scattered relics of Buddhism throughout the district, scholars became active to discover a Buddhist origin of the name 'Chittagong'. The great scholar and the first Indian explorer of Lhasa, Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Das of Alampur, Chittagong, expounds the theory that Chittagong is a corrupt form of Buddhist Chaityagrama;² this not only goes against the rules of phonetics but also against probability. Sir William Jones of illustrious memory, who was impressed by its great natural beauty and the music of the sea during his visit in 1786 AD, expresses the view that "The province of Chatigam (vulgarly Chittagong) is so called, I believe, from the Chatag (Sans. Chataka), which is the most beautiful little bird I ever saw."³ The Chatak, a pet of poets, begging water from clouds, notwithstanding the abundance of water below has no particular appeal to the people of Chittagong, one among thousands of whom has not even seen or heard of this bird. This is, therefore, poetic effusion and no history. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee holds the view that the present name is derived from Chavatigrama, which is a very ancient name of non-Aryan origin and which later becomes Chatigam.⁴ Again, some writers think that the area was originally inhabited by a class of people known as Chattas from whom the district received its name.⁵ Needless to say that there is no evidence of the settlement of these people in the district in ancient time. To Sir Henry Yule, a

¹ The modern kutchery hill of Chittagong town is also known as fairy Hill. and there is another hill known as Chati Pahad. Both these names are suggestive of the great Pir's spiritual away.

² Qt. O'Malley, *op. cit.*, pp. 1 and 66.

³ *H J*, p. 204

⁴ Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, *Bangala Bhashatatter Bhumika*, p. 26

⁵ Mahbubul Alam, *Chattagramer Itihasa*, Purana Amal, p. 3. Chattas are frequently mentioned in the Land grants of ancient Bengal.

noted Indologist, "the name seems to be really a form of the Sanskrit Chaturgrama (Tetropolis)."¹ with all our esteem for his authority, this far-fetched hypothesis appears to be fanciful and as little convincing as the claim of the pandits that Bolivia in South America was the place of exile of Bali Raja, who was cheated out of the dominion of heaven and earth by Trivikrama Vishnu. After the Muslim conquest of Chittagong the Brahmanas became busy concocting their theories and propagating them regarding the Hindu origin of the civilization of this tract. Brahmanical Chattala and Chattergrama are the Sanskritization of Chatgam or Chatigram and their so-called *Puranas* and *Tantras* were later literatures of the Muslim period.

We have no other alternative except to look for Chatgaon or Chittagong in the Arakanese and Muslim sources if we are to disbelieve the current story of Badr Shah's Chati that gave the tract its present name. Barnoille in *Description historique géographique de L' Inde* (1786) threw a suggestion that the name (Chatigan) originated from Arabic words, shat (delta) conjoined with Jam (the Ganges). He labours to prove that, "it was a name given by the Arabs, meaning the city at the mouth of the Ganges".² Barnoille's view is supported by the actual mention of Shatijam شاطئ جام in the works of Suleiman Mahri³ and Sidi Chelebi.⁴

This shows that Chittagong had been known to the Arabs and other

¹ H J, p. 204 ; also Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 167. According to Mc Crindle, "Chaturgrama could not originally have denoted a country, but only a place which later on became the capital though it was originally only the capital of four village communities over which a common headship was passed" (vide Mc Crindle, *Ancient India as described by Ptolemy*, p. 193).

² Qt, O'Malley, *op. cit.*, p. 1

³ Qt, Suleiman Nadvi, *The Arab Navigation*, trans, S S Abdur Rahman pp. 144—45,

⁴ Qt, J A S B, V (1836), 466

oriental peoples as Shatijam before the fifteenth century A D. Again, the Chittagong coin of Mohendra Deva and Danujamarddana Deva¹ named the mint town as Chatigrama, which makes certain that the name Chatigrama was current before the fifteenth century A D. The letters written by Mawlana Muzaffar Shams Balkhi to Sultan Ghiyas uddin Azam Shah (? 1390—? 1411 A D) mention Chatgaon as a port from where vessels used to sail to the Arab ports². The Chinese names Tsa-ti-Kiang³ and Choh-ti-gan for the port town of Chittagong in the beginning of the fifteenth century may have relation to Chatigaon. But it cannot be said with certainty from which time the Arab name Shatijam, the Aryanized name Chatigrama and the Chinese names Tsa-ti-Kiang³ and Cheh-ti-gan came into use to denote the place. If the identification of Ibn Battuta's Sadkawan with Chatganw چٹگانو of Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah's coins (1420 A D) be accepted, then it must be admitted that the Arabic name Shatijam was not known to the widely travelled Moorish traveller of the mid-fourteenth century. The case is further complicated by the omission of such a name as Shatijam in the works of the early Arab geographers, who nowhere mention any port by such name as corresponding to that of Chittagong. No doubt, the Arab geographers knew a place on the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal, Rahmi⁴ by name. This Rahmi has been identified by Dr. R. C. Majumdar as the kingdom of Ramyaka,⁵ the Buddhist name of Chittagong. Was then there no such place as Chittagong in the Pala age? The tract of Chittagong might have several other small principalities under other names, besides the Ramyaka kingdom.

¹ Nalini Kanta Bhattasali, *Coins and Chronology of the Early Sultans of Bengal*, pp. 119, 123

² *Journal of Bihar Research Society*, XI, II (1956), 13—15

³ *Visva Bharati Annals*, 1 (1945), 120, 128

⁴ H M Elliot and John Dowson, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, I, 5.

⁵ *Indian Historical Quarterly*, XVI (1940), 233

In Khurdadbah and al Idrisi call the only port in this region 'Samandar',¹ which goes to prove that no such name as Chatgam till then, had been given to the port, and that this tract was till then held by Hindu, Buddhist Rajas. We have it on the authority of the *Arakanese Chronicle* that a king named : Tsu-la-taing Tsandaya after conquering Bengal set up a stone pillar as a trophy memorial at the place since called Tset-ta-gaung as the limit of conquest.² This Arakanese king ascended the throne in Maghi year 311 corresponding to 952 A. D. He conquered this place two years later. This stone pillar with the inscription Tset-ta-gaung meaning 'to make war is improper' cannot be a myth. Similar instances are the cases of Rangoon, which in Burmese means 'the end of strife',³ Mrahaung or Myohaung means 'old city', and Ava which means 'the entrance to the lake'.⁴ Thus the euphemistic name of Chittagong bestowed by an Arakanese king in 952 A D became the established name of the region. The Bengali Chattagrama, the Chinese Tsa-ti-kiang, Cheh-ti-gan and the European Chittagong are but the deformed versions of the Arakanese name Tset-ta-gaung.

So we may conclude that the Arakanese conquest took place in two stages, first, the annexation of the kingdom; the foundation of the stone pillar marks the second stage, possibly the course of the Karnaphuli was the boundary of his dominion. This king's successors disregarded this self-denying ordinance and began aggressions anew, which pushed the boundary of the Arakanese rule to Bhulua in Noakhali.

The saint Badr Shah is generally identified with Pir Badruddin Badr-e-Alam, who died in Bihar and buried at Chhota Dargah in

¹ E D I, 90—91

² J A S B, XIII (1844), 36

³ 'Rangoon', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1966), XVIII, 1161

⁴ D G E Hall, *A History of South East Asia*, p. 160

1440 A. D. Whatever may be the merit of the identification, by no stretch of imagination may he be taken to have come to Chittagong before the fourteenth century. So the legendary origin of the name Chittagong with his chati goes against historical evidence.

A Tibetan religious work and an Arakanese temple inscription shed light on the naming of the district. Atisha (c. 980—c. 1053), the celebrated monk scholar of Eastern Bengal in his work *Namthor* mentions a place called Chandilahgram situated within the border of Bengala.¹ The name Chandilah accidentally occurs in an Arakanese temple inscription, engraved in 1540—41 A D. This Chandilahgram has rightly been identified by Rai S. C. Das Bahadur with Chatigram. The scholar expresses his opinion that, "it is very probable that in the Maga (Magh) language Chittagong—was called Chandilahgram which in Bengali is well known as Chatigram."² It is significant that the same name occurs in the two sources which are far apart in location and time. It is very difficult to explain what kind of relation prevailed between these two sources giving the same statement. There is however, no far fetched difference between Chandilahgram and Chandilah of the Tibetan and Arakanese sources respectively and Chattala and Chatta-grama of the Puranic and Tantrik sources.

The name of the district is pronounced and written variously by different writers, Ibn Battuta calls it Sadkawan. Sidi, the sixteenth century Turkish navigator, writes it Shatijam. The Chinese knew the port as Tsa-ti-kiang and Cheh-ti-gan. To the Portuguese it was Xatigan, Chatiga, Chatigao, Chatigam, Chatigan and a host of other depraved forms. Pyrard de Laval has Chartican, which occurs as Chatigon in Bernier. The Sanskritized name Chatigrama appears for the first time in the coins of Raja Danujamarddana deva

¹ I B T R S, VII (pt. IV, 1905). 5

² *Ibid.*

(1339 Saka/1417 AD). In Sanskrit and medieval Bengali works the word Chatigrama has been widely used.

The port town of Chittagong has been mentioned by some sources in altogether different names, Thua Samandar of the Arab geographers has been identified with Chittagong.¹ Prince Nusrat Shah gives the name Fathabad or place of victory to Chittagong.² The Portuguese and some other Europeans used to call it 'Porto-Grande', 'Porto Magnus' or the Great Port. The Dutch called it 'hoofstadt' or the chief Port.³ After its conquest by the Mughals, it was renamed Islamabad or the land of Islam.

Section 4. The People of Chittagong

The people of Chittagong carry history along with their dialect and their family epithet like the present writer and his ancestors. The old and the new have been so inextricably mixed up that Chittagong needs the labours of a linguist and an expert in social anthropology to prepare ground for a historian. At present the subject can be studied with our limited knowledge on this topic.

This district came into contact with foreign countries through war, trade and some other ways as a result of which, it became a place of settlements of distinct ethnical groups. With the passing of time the distinctive features of the various races gradually melted away and all of them merged into one Chittagong rather Bengali society. At present certain ethnological, religious and linguistic characteristics mark out the origin of the people of Chittagong.

¹ *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, VIII (1963), 13-24

² *Tarikh*, pp. 17—18

³ W H Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzib*, p. 46n.

For our convenience, we may divide the stream of peopling of the district into four successive stages. In prehistoric times Chittagong was inhabited successively by the Austre-Asiatic and the Mongoloid groups of people. Of these two, the latter one moulded a great factor in the political and cultural history of the district. The introduction of Buddhism and Hinduism brought a large number of northern Indian settlers of mixed Aryan descent into Chittagong. Culturally, the northern Indian religions and society were predominant no doubt but racially it was the Mongoloid people that predominated.

For about a thousand years the intermingling of mixed Aryan settlers with the Mongoloid groups of people went on. Trade contact with middle east countries and Muslim conquests of Chittagong brought Muslims of various nationalities to the shores of Chittagong. The early Muslim conquests of Bihar and West Bengal drove a large number of Buddhists to eastern countries including Chittagong.¹ The emigration of a large number of Hindus with the intention of residing in the district took place ever since. Chittagong was under Afghan occupation for some time. The Afghan occupation army could not return to their former military camps as these had fallen to the Mughals, their arch enemies. Moreover the gradual eastward expansion of the Mughal empire forced many Afghans to take asylum in the district.

During the Arakanese regime (c.1580-1666 A.D.) the amalgamation of the Mongoloid Buddhists and the northern Indian Buddhists became more extensive. Modern Baruas or the plains Buddhists probably owe their origin in this admixture. This period bears witness to the coming of the Portuguese whose admixture with the natives helped the formation of the Christian community of the district. The Magh and Firingi pirates brought thousands of

¹ see *Inf a*, ch iii, see 1.

captives, mostly Muslims, and allowed them to establish settlements in different parts of the district.

The Mughal conquest of Chittagong drove the Arakanese beyond the hill ranges, and the vacated places were occupied by new settlers from within or outside the district. The Mughal government encouraged the colonization in north western Chittagong, which had been depopulated during the Arakanese regime. The new colonizers mostly the inhabitants of Noakhali-Tripura-Comilla region were the latest settlers in the district. Owing to their late immigration they could not be assimilated in the district's larger population and they still find themselves closer to the people of Noakhali-Comilla region in custom and language than the people of the rest of Chittagong. The Mughals also brought a few northern Indian Hindu Kshatriyas and Muslims into the district. The Mughal rule is the last stage of the settlement and distribution of population. After this period no great change has taken place.

Chittagong like other districts (except Chittagong Hill Tracts) of Bangladesh is overwhelmingly a Muslim majority area. Nearly all the Muslims are Sunnis. The adoration of pirs and the existence of a large number of mazars and dargahs, which are distributed fairly all over the district indicates that the district was a stronghold of sufism in medieval times.

The Muslims of Chittagong are of mixed descent and considerable physical differences are noticeable among them. That Chittagong was regularly visited by the Arab traders is historically true and the possibility of Arab impact on Chittagong cannot be ruled out. Some people especially in and around the city may rightly claim their Semitic origin. With the consolidation of Muslim rule in Chittagong Muslims of other parts of Bengal flocked to the district and made settlements there. The Turks, the Pathans, the Mughals

dominated over the district and a great portion of them chose the district as a place of their residence. There was a good deal of intermarriage between Muslims coming from outside the district and natives. This racial admixture contributed greatly to the formation of Muslim community in Chittagong.

Dr. P. C. Mahalanobis, in connection with his analytical study of different races of Bengal observes : "(The Muslim) from East Bengal do not show any resemblance with the eastern tribes...In spite of geographical proximity they do not appear to have had any relations with the eastern tribes."¹ So far as the Muslims of Chittagong are concerned, the opinion of our scholar is a subject of an investigation. Muslims of some parts of southern Chittagong who are known as Rohang or Rosang Muslims have a considerable amount of Magh blood in their veins owing to the intermixture with that tribe. These people are broad shouldered, thin-bearded, short statured with high cheek bones, flat nose and eyelids obliquely set, which reminds one of their ethnic relation with the Arakanese. Most of the Muslims, residing in the area between the Karnaphuli and the Sankha are the descendants of the captives brought by the Arakanese and the Portuguese pirates from the Lower Bengal during the heyday of the Arakanese regime. They were allowed to settle in that region as peasantse cum boatmen under the overlordship of the Portuguese commanders. The greater portion of the Muslim population in Sitakunda and Mirsarai U. Z.'s are the descendants of the immigrants from's Noakhali-Tripura region during and after the Mughal regime.

The Hindus form the second largest community in the district. Among the higher castes the Vaidyas are the fewest but the most advanced section of the community. A peculiar feature of these people is that unlike their brothers in other districts they have Persian surnames

¹ J A S B—N S, XXIII(1927), 318

which suggest the profession of their ancestors under the Muslim rulers. There are practically no Kshatriyas except the Hazaris of Dohazari and some Singhs in the town who are said to be the descendants of the upcountry wardens serving under the Mughals.

Namashudras or the Harijan castes of Chittagong offer an interesting ground for ethnologists. The Doms and Hadis are probably the members of the people akin to the ancient Bengalees. These two classes of people are being regarded as separate from the caste Hindu society on account of their living a non-ritualistic and non-conformity with the strict Brahmanical doctrines.

Chittagong is the only district in Bangladesh where Buddhism is still a religion of a section of the population. The Buddhists of Chittagong belong to three groups, the plains Buddhists, the Maghs and the Chakmas. The distribution of Buddhist population is not uniform throughout the district. About half of their population live in Chittagong sadar north subdivision. The Buddhists are numerous in Raiganj, Rangunia, Patiya, Satkania and Fatikchhari U. Z's. Other u. z's, which contain a considerable number of Buddhists are Mirsarai, Hathazari, Chittagong Municipality area, Boalkhali, Banskhali, Chakaria, Cox's Bazar, Ramu, Ukhia and Teknaf. Buddhists are most sparse in Sandwip, Kutubdia, and other coastal islands.

The plains Buddhists are more closely related to the Hindus in appearance, dress and diet than their Magh and Chakma coreligionists. But unlike the Hindus they have no caste distinction and food restriction.

The Buddhists of Chittagong belong to Theravada, the same section existing in Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia and other south-eastern countries of Asia, though the district was once a stronghold of Mahayanism. Some of the notable monastic features, existing since old times, are that they call their temples as *kyangs* and priests as *thakurs* or *raulis*, the two customs prevalent during medieval times.

At present only few thousand people belong to the Christian faith and they are generally known as the Firingis, which is derived

from the Persian term Farank (فرنگ) applied invariably to the Europeans. The Firingis¹ of Chittagong are descendants of the Portuguese traders and bravados, who once lived in central Chittagong especially the port area. They are locally known as Matti Firingi or earth-coloured Europeans, the reference to whom is made by van Linschoten, Pyrard de Laval and other European travellers. It seems that Mesticos, or the half-caste Portuguese in their accounts are transformed into Matti-Firingi. Most of their surnames, such as De Barros, Fernandez, De Silva, De Cruz, Rozario Gomez are Portuguese thus testifying to their mixed origin.

Chittagong was known from the time of Abul Fazl down to our own time (to the snobbish and sneaking Calcutta Babus) as the "land of Maghs" (Magher Mulluk), where anarchy and lawlessness prevail. The people of trans - Padma territory, Hindus and Muslims, are all Bangals (uncouth people) in the eyes of the people of West Bengal who have wholesome fear of the Bengal desperados, capable of doing anything wicked. The Bangals in retaliation retort calling the genteel folk of West Bengal, ghati chor, i.e., lota thief, who cannot be trusted even with a trifle. This is, however, an echo of senseless regional prejudice as between the Londoners and the Scotchmen or in India in early Turkish regime between the Punjabis and the rice eating spiritless Purabiyas. Aman of Chittagong is in the estimation of a Bangal, a degree more dreadful, a savage (Magh). Chittagong pleads guilty to the charge; but the people of Chittagong themselves hold the Magh, a generic name for the hill people, as the saying goes, 'Maghe ar baghe haman. (sic saman); i.e., the Magh and the tiger stand on a par in fierceness and wildness. Whatever may be spoken about the character of the tribesmen, it cannot be denied that they are bolder than the plainsmen. They are accustomed to go through such hardships and

¹ For a narrative account of these people see H Beverley's contribution in the *Calcutta Review*, 1871.

experience such phenomena in their climes, which are fewer in lowlands that they have become a virile race and appear fierce to the plainsmen.

Section 5. Influence of Geography on the character and History of the People of Chittagong

The history of a country or a province cannot be justly discussed without due consideration of its geographical surroundings. The influence of geography in moulding character of the people and determining the course of history can never be overemphasised especially if the tract of country is like that of Chittagong. The soils, especially of the interior plains are extremely fertile. According to Walter Hamilton, 'the soil is so fertile that very little labour insures redundant crops'.¹ All the main rivers and their tributaries in their passage through the district are heavily laden during the rains with a burden of sand, clay particles, and vegetables debris. Almost all kinds of soil fit for cultivation can be seen here. The clayey soil areas of sadar south and Chakaria U. Z. may be called the bowls of paddy crops. The loamy soil, which exist throughout the district yields luxuriant cereal and winter crops for which the district is tenowned. The regular rainfall, the fertility of the soil, and the inexhaustible source of seafood make the occurrence of famine rarer than in other parts of Bengal. Foreign travellers of the medieval period speak highly of the fertility of soil and cheapness of provisions which prevented to a large extent the extreme scarcity of food in the district.

The character of the people of the district has been greatly influenced by its natural environment. From the geographical point of view the district of Chittagong contains extensive plains while the adjoining district of Chittagong Hill Tracts contains very few

¹ Hamilton, *op. cit.*, I, 168

level tracts of land. The conditions of life in the hilly regions have basic differences with those in the plains. The life of the hilly regions is somewhat harder. Everything, for example, communication by mountain track, tilling of soil, growing of corn, domestication of animals, procuring of food is more laborious than in the plains. The agriculture in the mountain slopes and foothills is such a strenuous effort that the cultivators struggle throughout their lives to keep the surface of the cultivated fields even and to hold the rainwater or irrigated water by enbanking patches of land. This accounted for the comparative economic backwardness of the cultivators of the hilly regions.

It is true that the hill people are somewhat shy and they avoid the company of alien people. This may be explained in view of the surroundings in which they live. Cut off by hill ranges from the outside world, they are mostly absorbed in their own affairs. Until recent times, they did not feel any necessity to make connections with outsiders. As a result of this isolation, they retain much of the archaic features, which have recently become a subject of sociological studies by scholars both at home and abroad.

The hilly region not only contributes to the material prosperity of the country but this has also socio - religious aspects. The hill tops such as Chandranath, Adinath, Chimbuk, Chitmarang etc. were fitting abodes for ascetics to practise ways and means of achieving salvation and as such these became centres of pilgrimages in later times. Again, the frequent change of domination over the district prevented it from becoming an exclusive Tripura or Arakanese or Bengali territory before the Mughal period. But Chittagong Hill Tracts maintained its political, economic and social independence inspite of frequent political changes in the neighbouring plains.

The topographical condition gave rise to the hostility between the plains people and the hill people. The causes of the hostility

between the plains people and the hill people were based on several factors. The first was the plains people's desire to bring hill people to obedience and to colonize the valleys of the hilly region. The second factor was the desire to gain the riches of the hilly region by the plains people and the hill peoples' attempts to plunder the villages of the plains. This conflict is obvious in the raids of the hill people in the plains and the military expeditions of the government of the plains land into the hilly area. This conflict lasted upto the nineteenth century when the hill people were finally subjugated by the British rulers.

It is the contiguity of ocean that influences much the character and history of the people of Chittagong. Though the district is situated in the tropical region, it never experiences the extremity of climate chiefly owing to the nearness of the ocean. The long sea coast, backed by the hills on the east made "an arrangement favourable for the free play of land and sea breezes."¹ The coast of Chittagong is one of the chief sources of common salt and the salt pits of Chittagong has been sending large sum to the state treasuries since medieval period. The proximity of ocean helps to furnish excellent crew among the people of Chittagong. The sailors of Chittagong earned a reputatior for their bravery and skilful navigation all over the subcontinent. It is due to its geographical position that brought the district into contact with the Far-Eastern and the Arabian sea ports. The sea communication with the rest of Bengal prevented Chittagong from becoming an exclusively Mongoloid territory like Chittagong Hill Tracts and the adjoining counntries Mizoram, Manipur etc. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, "Chittagong was its (Bengal's) chief port and the main gateway to the royal capital Gaur."² Campos rightly observes ;

¹ O'Malley, *op. cit.*, p. 16

² Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 21

"Its (the port of Chittagong) geographical position lent it importance, situated as it is at the mouth of the Meghna, this port was most convenient for navigation...All the Portuguese commanders that come to Bengal at first entered Chittagong."¹ The Chittagong coast was a particularly favourite hunting ground of the Portuguese free booters of the sixteenth century.

Physical environment always leave its mark on human history and our object is to trace how, in what ways, and to what extent this topographical features affected the course of history of this district. "For, it has been Nature, rather than Man, hitherto, in almost every case, that has determined where the action shall lie. Only at a comparatively late phase of action does man in some measure shift the scenery for himself."²

The geographical position kept the people of the district in self contained isolation in medieval times. O'Malley very rightly says "Their character has undoubtedly been very large influenced by the former isolation of the district...which explains many of the most striking peculiarities of the Chittagong people."³ Its situation in the extreme frontier in the map of Bengal and the isolation of the district from the main stream of social and political events lent some peculiarities to the folk tongue of the district. The dialect of Chittagong, originated from the eastern Indian Prakrit had its own process of growth and development. As a result, the Chittagong dialect is not readily intelligible to the people of the rest of Bengal. As Chittagong is placed by nature into small isolated areas like Scottish highlands or Iberian plateau, where distinctive

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Cambridge Ancient History*, I, 2 - 3

³ O'Malley, *op. cit.*, p. 64

racial and linguistic traits have been preserved through ages sometimes with small changes, as a result of which it became a rich and interesting field of historical, literary and ethnological objects. The cause of the survival of Buddhism in the district is, as O'Malley observes, "due partly to its proximity to the Buddhist country of Burma and partly to its isolation."¹ It is also due to its geographical position that it ceased to be predominantly Mongoloid or purely a Bengalee district, but a place of happy amalgamation of different races and culture. From the geographical, ethnological and historical considerations, Chittagong is closely related to Arakan since time immemorial. For a considerable time of its history the district was a victim of Arakanese and Tripura aggressions chiefly due to its geographical position. Neither the shallow river Feni on the north, nor the narrow river Naf on the south could resist the invading armies in turning the district to an arena in which the neighbouring combatant monarchs fought against each other. On the other hand, the longitudinal location of hill ranges, covered with dense jungles and intersected by innumerable rapid streams, offered almost an impenetrable barrier to the Mughal invasions during Jahangir's rule.

More than a century ago, Dr H Blochmann in his memorable 'Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal' observes: "Tiparah, Bhalua, Noakhali and District Chatgaon were contested ground, of which the Rajahs of Tiparah and Arakan were, at least before the seventeenth century, oftener masters than the Muhammadans. It was only after the transfer of the capital from Rajmahall to Dhaka, that the south-east frontier of Bengal was extended to the Pheni River which was the imperial frontier till the beginning of Aurangzeb's reign, when Chatgaon was permanently conquered, assessed, and annexed to subah Bangalah".² Fr Manrique with

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

² *J A S B*, XLII (1873), 226

his habitual keen insight observes that, "the city of Chatigan (under Arakanese regime) " was " a place of the first importance and the master key to the whole Magh Empire".¹ The district was always held as strategic possession to its overlord. Chiefly because of its location, the district frequently passed from one hand to the other. In the past, "Chittagong was a scene of tripartite struggle between the sovereigns of Arakan, Tripura and Muslim Bengal. Campos rightly remarks, Chittagong was always a bone of contention between the Rajas of Bengal, Arakan and Tippera, who strove for supremacy over the seaport."² Besides her strategic position, the abundance of resources, excellent facilities of ports and harbours and similar other factors made the district an invaluable one, for the possession of which the powers both foreign and of the subcontinent shed blood through ages.

¹ *Manrique I*, 283 - 284

² Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

CHAPTER II

AN EARLY HISTORY OF CHITTAGONG

Section 1, Racial Heritage of Pre-Aryan Chittagong

Chittagong is unfortunate in having failed to attract archaeologists in conducting a proper scientific exploration and excavation in places which are believed to contain prehistoric remains. One of the sites that may contain prehistoric remains is the upper valley of the river Karnaphuli, but this has gone under water of the man made lake of Kaptai. It is beyond doubt that heavy rainfall, luxuriant growth of vegetation and similar other natural factors destroyed much of the prehistoric remains. As a result, very few traces have so far been discovered to prove the existence of prehistoric culture in Chittagong.

For the purpose of the ecological, archaeological and ethnological study the whole area comprising modern Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Kachar, Mizoram, Tripura, Sylhet, Chittagong and Arakan should be regarded as a single unit. In this region stone weapons and implements, particularly of the later stone age have been discovered in large number. In Chittagong "a piece of fossil wood, pointed, elongated, one side flat, truncated butt, beautifully polished looking like an ornamental sword discovered in 1886 near Sitakunda Hills".¹ Dr A H Dani, who examined these tools and implements

¹ 'Catalogue Raisonne of the Pre-historic Antiquities in the Indian Museum', 160, qt R D Banerji, *Banglar Itihasa*, I. 9; also A H Dani, *Pre-history and Protohistory of Eastern India*, p. 87.

does not state the period to which these objects might belong. Most probably, these belong to the neolithic culture that prevailed in this region not later than two millenium B C. It may logically be supposed that these weapons and implements did get into Chittagong with the people who used them. These tools may be placed in a group with the same type of implements as found in different prehistoric sites of Nagaland, Meghalaya, Kachar and Arakan region. Who were these prehistoric people? Were they the original inhabitants of Chittagong? Were they hunters or cultivators? What type of building for habitation they built? Neither history nor archaeology can answer to all these questions. In fact, it is a mere presumption for any one to discuss the prehistoric culture of Chittagong relying on such a meagre evidence.

In the view of Dr S K Chatterjee, the Austro-Asiatic Arakanese and the Sino-Tibetans were some of the earliest occupants of Arakan-Chittagong area.¹ This view of our scholar is open to ethnographic controversy. Modern scholars are inclined to think that neither the Arakanese are of Austro-Asiatic origin nor the Chinese and the Tibetan can be grouped in one ethnic family. Nevertheless, the possibility of admixture of the Austric blood in the Arakanese vein cannot be ruled out.

It is generally supposed that either the Austroloid or the Proto-Austroloid peoples were the earliest inhabitants not only of this region but of the whole of the South and South-East Asia. The surviving trace of these people can still be seen in the deep jungles and isolated places of South Asia, Indo-China, Solomon islands, Fizi, Malaysia; Borneo, New Guinea, Australia and other continental and insular places. Material evidences prove that these people also roamed over the whole area that covers Nagaland, Manipur,

¹ *Jou nal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Letters, XVI (1950), 232

Meghalaya, Kachar, Sylhet, Tripura, Mizoram, Chittagong and Arakan. In Chittagong, stone pebbles, the chief source of neolithic arms and tools could be found in abundance in the stream beds in Sitakunda area where it seems the factory of the neolithic arms and implements was located. Probably, hunting in the deep forests was their chief occupation, though agriculture in a very crude form was also known to them.

The *Arakanese Chronicle* throws a bit of light on the existence of a savage people in the coast of Arakan. Sir A P Phayre presents the fact as follows :

Traces of the existence of a hateful race of men which existed on the seacoast, when the Mran Ma (the Burmans) entered the country. They are called in the vernacular Bee-loo which implies a monster or cannibal in human shape. It is from these beings that the country (Arakan) receives its Pali name Rek Khaik and hence its present name Rakhaing, Rek Khaik appears to have the same general signification as the vernacular Bee-loo. The Pali name being given to the country would seem to show that some Bee-loos were still there, when the Buddhist missionaries entered Arakan. The word Bee-loo appears to answer generally in popular meaning to the English ogre.¹

Figures of Bee-loos or Rakkhas (Sans. Rakhshasas) are also traced in the sculpture of Ananda temple at Pagan² and other religious edifices in many cities of Burma. From the work of a fourteenth century writer we come to know that some of the (aboriginal) inhabitants of Arakan (Rahan), "eat carrion and the

¹ J A S B, XXXIII (1864), 24

² Captain Henry Yule, "The Remains at Pagan", J A S B, XXVI (1857), 10

flesh of men."¹ Can these Bee-loos, Rakkhas and cannibals be identified with the Austroloid and proto-Austroloid peoples who shrank back to the remote places before the hostile attack by the Burmans ?

The neolithic culture, we are inclined to think, has little relation to the same type of culture that prevailed in the West Bengal river valleys because the vast marshy terrain of fluviatile Bengal puts a barrier to the intermixture of the two cultures. Scholars found out that there is fundamental difference between the neolithic implements of these two regions. The neolithic hunters have been pushed into the interior by the next settlers.

According to the Burmese chronicles, the Mons were one of the earliest settlers of Arakan and Burma. For several centuries they were peopling the country by driving the Austroloids to the western and southern edges of the Burmese plains. In later time, with the gradual expansion of the Khmer tribes towards central Burmese plains the Mons took shelter in south western coastal regions.

Let us suppose that the succeeding inhabitants in this region were the Mongoloid group of peoples who are still predominant in Chittagong Hill Tracts.² Like other Mongoloid tribes in north-eastern India, their "head is broad, complexion dark with a yellowish-tinge ; hair on face scanty, stature small or below average ;

¹ E D, I, 73

² For a sociological and anthropological study of the tribesmen of Chittagong the following books and articles may be helpful. (1) John Mac Rae, 'Account of the Kokis or Lunetas', *Asiatic Researches*, 7, 1801 ; (2) Henry Rickett, *Report on the Forays of the Wild Tribes of the Chittagong frontier*, Calcutta, 1843 ; (3) 'Some Account of the Hill Tribes in the Interior of the District

nose fine to broad; face characteristically flat; eyelids often oblique".¹ Mr Prichard describes their original home and their movement to other places as follows :

The vast region of Asia forming the south-eastern corner of the continent, which reaches in the sea border from the common mouth of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra to the Hoang-ho or Yellow River of China,...(which) is inhabited by races of people who resemble each other so strongly in moral and physical peculiarities, and in the general character of their languages as to give rise to a suspicion that they all belong to one stock...With the downward course of these rivers originated from the high country of central Asia...these nations appear also to have come down, at various periods, from the south eastern border of the Great Plateau, in different parts of which, tribes are still recognised who resemble in features and language.²

Mr Prichard's theory on the migration of the Mongoloid peoples from their original home to all over north-eastern India will help us in explaining the cause of the preponderance of the Mongoloid settlers in Chittagong Hill Tracts.

of Chittagong' by the Rev. M Barbe, *J A S B*, XIV, (pt I, 1845) 380—391 ; (4) Alexander Mackenzie, *History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the north east frontier of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1884 ; (5) R H S Hutchinson, *Gazetteer of the Chittagong Hill Tracts*, Allahabad, 1900 ; 6) Dr Piere Bessaiget, *Tribesmen of Chittagong Hill Tracts*. Dacca : Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1958 ; (7) Lucien Burnot, *Les Paysans Arakanais du Pakistan Oriental*, Paris : Le Monde Outre Mer Passe et Present, 1967.

¹ Risley, *The People of India*, p. 34

² *J A S B*, XXXIII (1864), 21

Mr Prichard's well supposed view can be illustrated by the following factors. The prefixes and suffixes such as di, ti, chi, denoting rivers, streams, channels etc. are non-Aryan, possibly Mongolian in origin. In Lushai, Murung and Chakma dialects 'tui' is used for water ; in Tibetan it is chu ; in Chinese it is chui or chu, all meaning the same object.¹ The Chakmas who live on the river banks are called 'Tui thak' by themselves. The Chakma and the Magh term khyoung means river, which corresponds to 'kiang' of Chinese language also meaning river, e g, Yang Si Kiang, Si Kiang etc. The river Karnaphuli is called Kynsa Khyoung and the river Sankha is called Rigray Khyoung and Sabak Khyoung by the hill peoples.² The Bengali names of the Sankha and the Matamuhuri are but Bengali version of the Magh names of Sangu (abbreviation of Sabok Khyoung) and Mamuri respectively.

It cannot be precisely said when this Mongoloid migration to this region did take place. This Mongoloid migration was probably accelerated by the pressure of the advancing Hans from northern China toward the south about 1500 B C. So far as Chittagong is concerned, some branches of the Mongoloid peoples entered Chittagong through Tripura, Lushai and Arakan Hill ranges. We need, however, more strenuous research work before we come to any settled facts about the routes and times of their migration. This movement of mankind is undoubtedly a complex chapter in history. The atmospheric changes, the pressure of growing population, continuous pressure of other races and the search for new land for cultivation were some of the many probable factors contributing to their constant movement. This movement, though slowed down at a later stage can still be illustrated by the practice of 'Yom' or shifting cultivation by the tribesmen of the hilly region of

¹ J A S B, XIVIII (1879), 270 ; *Encyclopaedia Asiatica*, III, 940

² O'Malley, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9

Chittagong. In this way, the whole of Chittagong, including Hill Tracts was gradually peopled by the Mongoloid tribes.

The pattern of settlement of the prehistoric Mongoloid migrants was small scattered hamlets, which shifted with the evermoving slash and burn locally called 'Yom' cultivation in Chittagong and its adjoining areas. Yom (or Yoma) is an Arakanese word for hills and hill ranges. This suggests that this type of cultivation was evolved by the dwellers amongst hill ranges of Arakan, probably during the Mon period. The people do not cultivate one place continually because soils gradually lose fertility after the forest cover had been cut. This method of cultivation is ecologically adaptive to south east Asian humid and heavily forested lands, which climatically includes Bangladesh.

But it is not true to say that all of the hill people have been practising only shifting cultivation since very early times. At some later stage, the hill people became adapted to the settled cultivation. In Chittagong, the tribesmen are divided roughly into two classes, the taung-tha or jumia meaning man living on the hill tops and khyoung-tha meaning man living on the river banks, who practise settled cultivation on the river banks, the fertility of which never exhaust by incessant cultivation.

What types of crops the inhabitants raised in the prehistoric times? Modern researchers throw some light on this. It has generally been supposed that wheat, millet, barley etc. were introduced into India by immigrants from western Asia. These are the typical products of semi arid regions and were not produced by the prehistoric people of south east Asia. People of south east Asia has been raising rice, banana, various types of yam and gourds, beans, tea, spices, roots, sati, coconuts, betel leaves and nuts, several types of monsoonal fruits etc., since prehistoric times. These items are well adapted to the humid tropics and are still cultivating in Chittagong.

The Mongoloid peoples had to recede to the hilly regions by the continuous pressure of a heterogeneous people called Bengalees who themselves are composed of diverse elements such as Caucasoids, Dravidians, Negroloids, Austroloids and Mongoloids. But the Mongoloid tribesmen did not yield to them without resistance. The agelong conflict between Bengal and Arakan for the possession of Chittagong is but one phase of this conflict. With the Mughal conquest of Chittagong in 1666 A D, the Mongoloid Arakanese were driven out from the plains, which were left out only to be filled up by the Bengalees.

Since the commencement of the clash between the Mongoloid peoples and the outsiders, Hill Chittagong became a place of refuge for the vanquished people. There they found all sorts of advantages that a mountain region can afford. A learned contributor in a respectable magazine very aptly writes: "Defeated people everywhere have fled before the conquerors of their rich plains and settled in fastnesses where no one would challenge their right to land, that is so little favoured and so hard to get at¹ Thus the inhospitable hilly terrain of Hill Chittagong was turned fit for habitation by human endeavour and the new settlers found the hilly region a secure place for their life and culture. There they live for centuries in isolation which was enforced upon them by the mountain fastnesses. That is why Hill Chittagong is still a predominantly Mongoloid territory and Buddhism mixed with animism is still the dominating religion of these peoples. Only in the present century has the isolation of the hill peoples been disrupted.

The Mongoloid peoples such as the Maghs, the Chakmas, the Tripuras and a host of other allied tribes form a great factor in

¹ 'Man', *Life International*, XXXIV (July, 1963), 66

moulding the history of the district. Politically, they dominated over the district in most times of its history. A large number of Mongoloid terms found their access into Chittagong dialect. Mongolian influence is noticeable in the mode of pronunciation of the people of the district. For example, Bengali unaspirated 'প' (p) is pronounced aspirated 'ফ' (ph) in Chittagong dialect. In fact, Mongolian influence is so trenchant in the dialect that the people have a general tendency to replace aspirated alphabets for the unaspirated ones.

It cannot be said with certainty whether Chittagong like the Lower Burma came into close contact with the Dravidian of southern India but the Dravidian influence is well marked on Chittagong dialect. Terms such as থোড় (thigh) and লেড় (limit) of Chittagong dialect are derived from Dravidian terms தோড় and லேட meaning respectively the same.¹ Its influence is noticeable even in the placenames of the district. Dravidian Jota and Jotika occur though in deformed manner is Joda and Judi or even Judia in the dialect and placenames of the district,² e, g, Bainjuri, Bhandarjuri etc. which invariably means the drainage or channel. It is supposed that Dravidian Vada or Kol Odak 'house' is partially the source of Bengali 'da' (- ডা) which is a very common affix occurring all over Bengal. Village names of Chittagong such as Pomada, Mohada may be cited as instances. A class of people, known as Hadis,³ belonged to the Namoshudra section of the Hindu society, may be taken as representatives of the Dravidian settlers. The lineaments of their heads and skulls, their facial features have much resemblance to the Dravidian people of southern India. Their chief occupation like that of

¹ Nagendra Nath Chowdhury, *Bangabhasha O Bangasahityer Kramobikash*, pt. 1, p. 19

² I H Q, 1939, p. 139

³ The Hadi of Chittagong is mentioned in the *Tripura Chronicle*.

the coastal inhabitants of Orissa. Andhra and Madras is fishing. Their religious belief is of primitive type and like the people of southern India snake goddess is their chief deity, whom they worship with slaughter of animals.

Placenames provide an important evidence of ethnic and linguistic history. Many placenames of prehistoric and early historic period survive even today through periods of political changes. Many of these names defy linguistic explanation. The following non-Aryan suffixes of placenames of the district will testify to the pre-Aryan and non-Aryan settlements in the district.

- aish (?) : Panchlaish, Amilaish, Quaish Kashiaish, Kaliaish etc.
- bil, bila, (marshes and flooded lands) ; Suabil, Noabila, Nalbila, Bagabila etc.
- chi,—chia,—chua (pertaining to water passage) : Amuchia, Gaschi, Eochia. Keochia, Soochia, Demuchia, Kachua etc.
- danga (small hill or elevated land) : Karaldanga, Kulaldanga Goshaildanga, Dengapara etc.
- dhala (narrow serpentine mountain track) : Baraiardhala, etc.
- ghona (narrow valley, small lowland more or less enclosed by hills) : Chandraghona, Baraghona, Fakiraghona, Kumiraghona etc.
- ghop (subside land) : Baraghop etc.
- juri (canal or water passage) : Bhandarjuri, Binajuri, Batajuri, Jumijuri etc.
- kora (?) Paraikora etc,
- Kum (underground hollow, depression of land) : Mahishkum etc.
- khola (stretched field, fair) : Suryakhola, Maghkhola etc.
- palong (Arakanese term denoting settled places) : Khumiapalong, Dhopapalong, Jaliapalong, Rajapalong etc.

In the Dhanyamanikya Khanda of the *Chronicle* the Chittagong Hadi appears as musician cum band player, soldier and pig hunter (Vide Dinesh Chandra Sen. *Vrihat Vanga*, Introduction). The Hadi of Chittagong is still a people of professional musician.

- ra (pertaining to settled place) : Pomara, Guzara, Mohara, Jobra, Gohira, Mahira, Samura, Bengura etc.
- sa (?) : Dhensa, Pantrisa etc.
- ua, ywa (Arakanese term meaning village)¹ : Parua, Bathua, Fenua, Kachua, Padua, Pakua etc.

These are but a few of the non-Aryan placenames which are not less than a half of the total number of placenames of Chittagong.

Section 2. Aryanization of Chittagong

For several centuries the Mongoloid group of human race was peopling the district and its neighbourhood. The area might be visited by northern Indian wanderers from time to time. They were either absorbed in or exterminated by the Mongoloid peoples, leaving no trace of their visit. But in the early Christian centuries a great cultural force began to extend toward the Mongoloid territories in eastern India before which these sturdy peoples could not maintain their cultural independence. This was the overwhelming force of Aryanization.

Aryanization of the district started in the long past. The *Mahabharata* mentions a place known as Kiratadesa, of which geographical boundary is defined by Mr Pergiter as follows : "It (the name Kirata) was applied to tribes inhabiting the Himalayas Range and its southern slopes from the Punjab to Assam and Chittagong."² The Kiratas participated in the great war of Kuru-

¹ J A S B, XV (1846), 75

² F E Pergiter, 'Ancient Countries in Eastern India', J A S B, vol. 66, pt. I, 1877, pp. 106-109.

kshetra and thus came into contact with the Aryans. The *Arakanese Chronicle* states that, Gautama Buddha visited and lived in Arakan for some time. According to the local tradition, Gautama Buddha visited and established Dharma Chakra (wheel of religion) in some places of Chittagong. These legends may contain a great amount of fabrication but the possibility of the coming of Buddhist missionaries from time to time cannot be ruled out. These missionaries may have been confused with the founder of the religion. Seafaring people of other parts of India must have visited the port of Chittagong during the days of *Jataka* stories, the Mauryas, the Guptas and the Palas during the times of which, vigorous colonial activities took place across the Bay of Bengal.

A vigorous movement toward Aryanization of the non-Aryan people of Chittagong and its adjoining tracts seems to have commenced from the third century B C, when Buddhism and Pali language were introduced in this region. The Brahmana and Buddhist missionaries, Tantrik writers, soldiers, traders, artisans, adventurers and emigrants from the west visited to this region. The result of this process of Aryanization is that the non-Aryan peoples, especially the Mongoloid races, began to name themselves as well as their settled places in Aryan terms. The adoption of Magadha Prakrit from which the dialect of Chittagong evolved¹ as a spoken language, is another important step in the process of Aryanization of the district. The process of Aryanization, moulded chiefly by Buddhism, led the Mongoloid tribes of Chittagong-Burma region unified under one great faith. "The union of the tribes", as Phayre correctly says, "was accomplished, probably very gradually, under the influence of Aryan immigrants, chiefly, if we may trust the national traditions, Kshatriyas from Gangetic India, who introduced the softening influences of Buddhism."² Thus the Mongoloid tribesmen of this region, especially

¹ Ramesh Chandra Majumdar (ed), *History of Bengal*, 1, 377

² A P Phayre, *History of Burma*, p. 2

the Chakmas and the Maghs lost their cultural independence and they were hammered into a homogeneous Buddhist society. Buddhism thus completed the work began earlier by Brahmanism.

The language of the inscriptions, discovered in Chittagong gives evidence of the extent of the influence of Aryanization. The copperplate inscriptions belonging to Hindu Buddhist period are composed in Sanskrit language. The script of copperplate grants of both Kantideva and Damodaradeva belong to the proto-Bengali characters of the ninth to thirteenth centuries. The pedestal inscriptions of the Mahayanic Buddhist images dug out from the district and cast in the ninth through eleventh centuries tell us a good deal of Aryanization of the district. The language is mostly Sanskrit or mixed Sanskrit and Pali. These epigraphic evidences suggest that Buddhism prevalent during this period is of north eastern Indian variety with Sanskrit as vehicle of expression. The inscriptions also prove that Buddhists showed interest in Sanskrit no less than in Pali, their religious language.

An analysis of the inscribed placenames shows the strong inclination toward Aryanization. In the Chittagong plate of Kantideva¹ we find a place named Vardhamanapura. It may possibly suggest either the colonization of immigrants from Vardhamana Bhukti in Radh countries or the settlement of the followers of Mahavira Vardhamana. In Damodaradeva's copperplate inscription,² we find inflated Sanskritized placenames such as Dambaradama, Kamanapaundiya, Navrapaliya, Ketangapala, Mritachharda, Bagha-pokhira, Lavanotsavasramasambasabati. Chattagrama, the Sanskritized form of the Arakanese name of the district is another instance worth

¹ *Modern Review*, 1922, pp. 612 - 614

² N G Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, 158 - 163

mentioning of Aryanization of the placenames. While analyzing the Sithaung temple inscription in Arakan, Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterjee observes : "This single inscription gives us a good deal about the milieu for Brahmanization or Indianization of the Kirata peoples of Chittagong and north Arakan before the 8th century."¹ This process of Aryanization was so vigorous that the non-Aryan names of the places tended to be transformed into Aryanized ones by the new settlers. Thus Chet-ta-gaung became Chatigrama or even Chattala in the Bengali and Hindu Tantrik works ; river Sabok Khyoung became Sankha, Mamuri was transformed into Matamuhuri ; Deang became Devagrama and so on.

The following is a short list of Aryan suffixes found in the placenames of Chittagong.

- grama, -gram (Sans. meaning village, often changed into-gaon) : Chattragram or Chatgaon, Banigram, Haidgaon or Deogang Hastigr-ama, Devagram (alias Deang), Palagram, Koigram etc.
- dandi (Hindi meaning road, often becomes dandi in vulgar tongue in the district. In Hindi, the terms Pagdandi and danda mean high embankment. Sagardandi, the birth place of poet Madhusudan, in the district Jessor is an instance of a placename suffixing - dandi) : Suchakradandi, Gomdandi, Chhandandi, Bagdandi, Kokdandi, Yakubdandi etc.
- dwipa (Sans. meaning island or islet, often changed into - dia, Portuguese diu) : Sandwip, Kutubdia, Sonadia etc.
- khain (colloquial form of khand, administrative or revenue division) : Karankhain, Jangalkhain, Kachukhain, Panchkhain etc.
- khila (Sans. meaning fallow land) : Sonarkhil, Kodhurkhil, Kaderkhil etc.

¹ J A S B, Letters, XVI (1950), 234.

- kunda (Sans. meaning well, spring etc.) : Sitakunda, Barabkunda etc
- ghat (landing place) : Gorakghata, Dhalghat etc.
- pura, - pur (Sans. meaning town) : Durgapur, Sripur, Ichapur, Jaisthapura, Kalipur, Janardanpur, Sadhanpur etc,
- nagara (Sans. meaning town) : Mariamnagar, Yakubnagar etc.

This process of Aryanization was so vigorous that the tribes who are predominantly non-Aryan, tried desparately to assert their Aryan origin. Thus the Tripuras trace their origin to the Lunar dynasty of the *Mahabharata* ; the Maghs claim themselves as the descendants of the emigrants from Magadha; the Chakmas claim Champaknagara (? Champaran in Bihar) as their ancestral home ; the Rajbanshi Baruas or the plains Buddhists proudly claim their descent from the Kshatriya warriors of Magadha.

Sir George Grierson rightly pointed out that, "when an Aryan tongue comes into contact with an uncivilized aboriginal one, it is invariably the latter which goes to the wall."¹ So far as Chittagong is concerned, this scholarly remark is quite tenable as most of the tribesmen are now habituated to speak standard Bengali and Chittagong dialect.

The progress of Aryanization among the hill people was not uniform. It was the Tripuras who were heavily influenced by Aryanization. They have adopted Bengali language as medium of instruction. Geographical position of Tripura state is one of the causes of the extensive influence of Aryanization as the state is surrounded by Bengali speaking people on three sides. The Chakmas also have responded favourably to Aryanization. Aryanization has a considerable influence upon the Maghs whose religious language is Pali. But such tribesmen as the Bawms, the Murungs, the Pankhos, the

¹ *Imperial Gazetteer*, I, 351—352;

Khumis etc. are least affected by the process of Aryanization. They do not, as a rule, understand Bengali and never speak it among themselves. They are primarily animistic in their religious faiths.

Section 3 Chittagong in the Accounts of the Classical Writers of the West

The Greek and the Egyptian writers possibly knew the area during the early centuries of the Christian Era. The author of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* gives an account of the area as follows :

Ganges comes into view, and near it, the very last land towards the east Chryse. There is a river near it called the Ganges. On its bank is a market town which has the same name as the river Ganges. Through this place are brought malabathrum and Gangetic spikenard and pearls, and muslins of the finest sorts, which are called Gangetic. It is said that there are gold mines near these places, and there is a gold coin which is called Caltis. And just opposite this river there is an island in the ocean, the last part of the inhabited world towards the east, under the rising sun itself; it is called Chryse. ¹

Pliny's passage undoubtedly contains many interesting geographical information that may have relation to this part of the globe. The situation of Chryse is variously defined by different scholars.²

¹ W. H. Schoff (ed.) *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, pp. 47 - 48

² Col. Yule applied the name Chryse "to a promontory or place on the coast of the gulf of Martaban". Mr Lassen thinks it to be Pegu. According to Phayre, modern Thaton in Burma "fulfils the conditions so completely" with the details of the travellers (Phayre, *op. cit.*, pp. 25 - 26)

Dr N K Bhattasali's identification of the island of Chryse with the island of Sandwip is wise one. He writes :

It is well known that the eastern coast of the Indian ocean has the general appellations, Suvarnabhumi and Suvarnādwipa (the golden land or the golden island), and when the name Chryse meaning golden, is applied to the last inhabited region in the coast, probably we have to understand Suvarnādwipa on the eastern coast of the Indian ocean. But when the name is applied to an island in the mouth of the Ganges we should have no difficulty in recognising the well known island of Sandwip. ¹

The term Chryse is derived from Khrusos, a Greek word meaning gold, golden or yell w. ² It is likely that Pliny mentions the land by its Greek translation, and not by its original name. Probably, the original name is too turgid to keep in his memory and hence he preferred to call it in translated form.

The name of the island Sandwip located by the European travellers, and historians on the mouth of the Ganges is undoubtedly and old one. But neither in Sandwip nor in the territories adjacent to it gold is mined though the gold coin named Caltis might be the legal tender during Pliny's days. Pliny was perhaps aware of this anomaly and he writes elsewhere : "Beyond the mouth of the Indus (sic) are Chryse and Argyre abounding in metals as I believe, for I can hardly believe what some have related that the soil consists of gold and silver".³

¹ *Science and Culture*, VII, 238.

² "Chryse", *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (5th ed.), p. 212; H. J. p. 274

³ *Indian Antiquary*, 1879, p. 150

The market town, which is located by Pliny on the river Ganges and which had the same name as the river is identified by Mr Murray¹ and Mr Birdwood² with Chittagong. The Sandwip Channel between Chittagong and Sandwip is really a portion of the greater outfall of the joint rivers the Padma and Meghna. The exportable commodities of the town mentioned by Pliny were either produced or obtainable in the adjoining areas of Chittagong. Malabathrum or "cinnamonum albiflorum is designated as taj, tejpat in Hindusthani.... Taj, tejpat or tejapatra, by all which names this leaf is known, is used as a condiment in all parts of India".³ Lassen remarks: "it can, however, be asserted that in Sylhet which is not very remote from Chittagong, malabathrum is produced at this very day".⁴ Spikenard or fragrant herbal oil or ointment perhaps used to be extracted from the aloe wood, Garjan etc. which grow abundantly in the forests of Hill Chittagong, Tripura and Sylhet and they are still renowned for the medicinal qualities they contain. Muslins or superfine cloths are indigeneous products of this part of the country from time immemorial.

Ptolemy, the famous Greek geographer refers to a number of places related to this region. Modern scholars make an effort to trace the origin of the etymology mentioned in Ptolemy's book. The scope of disagreement on the identification of the placenames is so great that we can do no better than summarizing the points.

¹ I A 1884, p. 365

² G Birdwood, *Report on the Old Records of the India Office*, p. 106

³ J A S B, XVI (1847), 38 - 39

⁴ Lassen in I A, 1884, p. 371. Tejpat grows abundantly also in the district of Chittagong.

In the Gangetic Gulf beyond the mouth of the Ganges, there lies the coast of the Airrhadaï (? Arakan) in which the following cities and towns¹ are situated.

(a) Pentapolis (150°—18°). Of this city, Lassen remarks : "Between the name of the city Pentapolis, i e, the five cities, and the name of the most northern part of Kिरradia, i e, Chaturgrama, i e., four cities there is a connection that scarcely be mistaken".² The northern point of land at its (the Karnaphuli) mouth is, according to Mr Wilford, called Pattana, and hence he thinks that Chaturgrama (Chittagong) is the Pentapolis of Ptolemy for Pattanaphulli, which means flourishing seat.³

(b) Mouth of the river Katabeda (151° 21'—17°). Mc Crindle identified this river with the Karnaphuli. ⁴

(c) Barakoura, a mart (152° 30'—16°). This mart is placed in Yule's map at Ramai, called otherwise Ramu, a town lying 68 miles s s e of Chittagong. ⁵

(d) Mouth of the Tokosanna (153°—140° 30'). This river is identified with the Arakan River by Wilford and Lassen. Yule prefers the Naf. ⁶

¹ Only those places which are supposed to be related to Chittagong have been cited here.

² I A, 1884, p. 371 ; Mc Crindle, *op. cit.*, p. 193

³ Mc Crindle, *op. cit.*, pp. 194 - 195

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 194

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 195. Nevertheless, it has phonetic similarity with Barabkunda near Sitakunda,

⁶ *Ibid.* It may be mentioned that the Portuguese historian De Barros marked in his map a place named Taucosam in the interior of the district.

(e) Rhingiberi (166° - 18°). Wilford places this town of the Trans - Gangetic India near Chittagong and identifies with Rangamati in Chittagong Hill Tracts. ¹

(f) Kokkanagara (160° - 20°), is supposed by Yule to be located in Taranath's Kokiland and identified with Rangamati in Chittagong Hill Tracts.²

The references to this region by the classical writers are not clearly expressed and naturally invite much speculation. But the vagueness of their knowledge of this clime will not seem unnatural in the age of very imperfect geographical knowledge.

Section 4. Political History down to the Muslim Conquest

The history of Chittagong in the ancient period is largely a guesswork. We have two main kinds of evidence on which to base our guesses : one, the meagre and unconnected records in the *Tibetan and Arakanese Chronicles* ; the other, the revelations of the spade.

Chittagong, according to the local Hindu tradition, was visited by Shri Ramachandra, the hero of the great epic *Ramayana*. The ardent Hindus believe that the prince during his twelve years' exile in Dandak forest, visited the shrine of the sage Medhas Muni, who had come here before him. Shri Rama is believed to be the founder of such places as Ramgarh, Ramakhetra or Ramkot, Sitakunda or the well named after Sita, his consort. Similarly, the Buddhists of Chittagong believe that Lord Buddha established Dharma Chakras

¹ I A, 1884, p. 383. There is a place named Ring Bang in Chakaria U. Z.

² *Ibid.*, p. 384

in Chakaria, Chakrasala, Shakyapura (Shakpura) in Chittagong and died at Kusinagara or Kusinara, the Buddhist name of Sitakunda. This kind of legendary tales, current among the religious minded people of the district is so numerous that we must abstain from citing these tales for the sake of a critical study of history.

The *Mahabharata* and the classical writers of the West refer to a place named Kiratadesa and Cirradioi respectively, which roused the interest of modern historians. The place is also referred to in some Hindu Tantras. According to Mr Pergiter, "it (the term Kirata) was applied to tribes inhabiting the Himalaya range and its southern slopes from the Punjab to Assam and Chittagong."¹ With regard to the location of Kirata land, Lassen writes: "By the name Kirradia, Ptolemy designates the land on the coast of further India from the city of Pentapolis, perhaps the present Mirkanserai (Mirsarai) in the north, as far as the mouth of the Tokosanna or Arakan river."² Mc Crindle holds a similar opinion and says: "By the Cirradioi are meant the Kirata a race spread along the shores of Bengal to eastward of the mouths of the Ganges as far as Arakan."³ It appears that the Kirata people were essentially non-Aryan and most probably belong to either the Mongoloid or Austro-Mongoloid groups of people living in the mountain slopes of north eastern India. It may be noted that almost all the legends connected with Kirata land and the Kirata people are related to north eastern India. Dr S K Chatterjee wants to include Chittagong-Arakan region in the ancient Kirata land.⁴ Following the description of the reputed scholars, we may place Chittagong in the Kirata Territory, the boundary of which has not been satisfactorily settled so far.

¹ Pergiter, *op. cit.* qt., J A S B, LXVI (1897), 108 - 109

² Qt Mc Crindle, *op. cit.*, p. 192

³ *Ibid.*, p. 199

⁴ J R A S B, Letters, XVI (1950), 234

Lama Taranath, the celebrated Tibetan historian, includes Chittagong and other countries of eastern India under the generic name of Kokiland.¹ This region was possibly known as such because of the probable domination of the Kokis over the area in the distant past. The name Koki which is spelt Kuki in native tongue continued to serve as a name of the hill tribe down to the nineteenth century. The *Rajamala* mentions these people. Some old poems narrate the incursions of these people in the plainsland.² A number of English writers of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century wrote a lot about these people.³ Their narrations indicate that the name Koki stands as a name for the Mongoloid tribes that are residing in the hilly regions of north east India. In fact, the name Koki or Kuki is an aggregate of the various Mongoloid tribes that have been included under the single word Koki in Taranath's account.

No direct evidence is available to prove the pre-Mauryan or Mauryan control over Chittagong. The first two Mauryas were, by no means, the overlord of the whole of the subcontinent. It was in the reign of Asoka that the empire reached its farthest extent and comprised almost the whole of the subcontinent. The only trace, so far discovered, of the Mauryan suzerainty over this part of Bengal is an image inscription found at Silua⁴ in Feni District, written in Brahmi script and in Prakrit language and it has

¹ N R Roy, *Sanskrit Buddhism*, p. 77

² For example, Gul Baksh's poem, Dhaka University Library M S No. 148

³ Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 173 - 174, 177; J A S B, XIV(1845), pp. 380 - 391; J A S B, XIX (1850), 542 n, 550 n; J A S B, XXV (1856), 178; J A S B, XXXII (1863), 407 - 408; I A 1872, pp. 225 - 226; W W Hunter, *op. cit.*, 59 f.

⁴ Archaeological Survey of India, 1930 - 34, pp. 38 - 39

been assigned to the second century B C. Taranath writes that, "in the Koki land (which included Chittagong) there existed since the time of king Asoka, sections of the Sangha".¹ Yuan Chwang states that a stupa of Asoka stood in the capital of Samatata.² However, the source of the history of Bengal under the Mauryas and the post Mauryan period is so scant that it will be a guesswork to dilate upon the subject any further. There is, however, reason to believe that, during that time the Buddhist priests and missionaries from India regularly poured in Burma and other Far Eastern countries through this district and the Buddhist pilgrims from those countries travelled through the district to visit the holy places in India.

The history of Chittagong is equally obscure during the post Maurya and the Gupta rule in India. For the history of the pre-Pala period we have to turn to the Tibetan sources particularly Lama Taranath's work, which supplies us much information regarding the history of Chittagong before the muslim conquest.

According to Taranath, a Buddhist dynasty ruled in Bengala before the Palas and the names of all the kings mentioned by him prior to Gopala end in Chandra. He writes :

In the east Vimala Chandra, son of Bala Chandra (Bala Chandra was the son of Sinha Chandra who reigned in Bangal. Bala-chandra extended his power to Tirhut and Kamarupa. At this time Magadha was ruled by the elder son of King Harsha) had established his power over the three great provinces, viz., Tirabhukti Bangala, and Kamarupa....King Vimala Chandra had married a sister of King Bhartrihari, the last of the line of the Chadras

¹ I H Q, 1951, p. 246

⁵ T Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, II, 187

who ruled in Malava, and had two sons, viz., Lalita Chandra and Gopi Chandra. After king Bhartrihari had renounced the world in order to live the life of an ascetic, Lalita Chandra succeeded him. King Vimala Chandra was succeeded by Gopi Chandra, during whose reign the seat of government was Chatigrama (modern Chittagong) in Eastern Bengal.¹

The lineage of kings, surnamed Chandra ruling in Bangala and its adjoining territories needs special attention as their seat of administration is stated to be Chatigrama. Sinha Chandra, the first ruler of this royal lineage reigned in Bangala. His son and successor Balachandra extended his power over a large area comprising Tirabhukti (modern Tirhut in Bihar) and Kamarupa at a time when Magadha was being ruled by the elder son of king Harsha (Emperor Harshavardhana). Incidentally, we come across another lineage of kings, surnamed Chandra in the Sitthaung Temple inscription of Arakan.² According to the chronological table, given in the temple inscription, king Balachandra is said to be the first king of the Shri Dharmarajanya Vamsa. Scholars express opinion that king Balachandra of Sitthaung Temple inscription is identical with king Balachandra of Taranath's narration. According to Mr Hirananda Shastri, the inscription "is written in characters resembling those of the later Gupta script."³ Shri Jogendra Chandra Ghosh tentatively puts the date of king Balachandra of inscription, "sometime between 647 A D and 833 A D."⁴ This roughly corresponds to the date of king Balachandra of Taranath's narration. All these evidences and opinions naturally give an impression that king Balachandra of Taranath's

¹ J A S B, LXII (1898), 21 - 22

² A S I, 1925 - 26, pp. 146 - 148

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ I H Q VII (1931)

narration and the king of the same name in the Sitthaung Temple inscription were identical persons. It is likely that king Balachandra held both Eastern Bengal and Arakan under his sway and established his capital at Chittagong which held central position in the empire.

King Gopi Chandra grandson of king Balachandra and the third monarch of the lineage has been identified with Gopachandra of copperplate grant¹ and Gopichandra of popular poems.² The title Maharajadhiraja assumed by king Gopachandra of copperplate inscriptions proves that he was an independent and powerful ruler. The story related by Taranath³ has similarity to the wellknown Gopichand - legend of East Bengal Ballads.⁴ Gopichandra's father Vimalachandra has been stated by Taranath to have been a contemporary of Dharmakirti. I - tsing mentions Dharmakirti among the great masters of Buddhism in his time and according to him Bhartrihari, contemporary of Dharmakirti died in 651 A D. According to Mr. Vassilief, Dharmakirti was a contemporary of king Srong - tzan-gampo of Tibet, born in 627 A D. The Date of Gopichandra has been determined by Dr. R C Majumdar as follows : "As Dharmakirti was a disciple of Dharmapala, who was a professor in Nalanda at the time when the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang visited it, Gopi Chandra's reign may be placed in the last quarter of the seventh century A D."⁵ Gopi Chandra was succeeded by Lalita Chandra, the last king of the

¹ F E Pergiter's article, *I A*, XXXIX, 103 - 216 ; D C Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, I, 287f., 290f., 332f., 346f., 352f.

² Dr. Hoernle's article in *I A* (1910)

³ *J A S B*, LXVII (1898), 23 - 24

⁴ Grierson's article in *I A S B*, XLVII (1878), 135f. ; D C Sen and B R Roy, *Gopi Chandrer Gan*, Calcutta University, 1922

⁵ *H B*, I, 186

line of the Chandras. As Taranath did not specifically mention any other seat of administration during the time, it can be assumed that Chittagong continued to be the capital of these rulers.

It appears from Taranath's narration that the Palas succeeded the Chandras in their dominion. Gopala's territory was, undoubtedly much smaller than that of his successors. As the royal seat of the Chandras of Taranath's account was in Chatigrama, it can be reasonably proposed, following Taranath, that the original kingdom of the Palas was situated somewhere in south east Bengal possibly at Chatigrama. But this inference is disputed by the evidence of *Ramacharitam*¹ of Sandhyakar Nandi and the Kamauli grant² which refer to Varendra as the 'Janakabhū (paternal kingdom) of the Palas. In *Ramacharitam*, Dharmapala has been stated as 'Samudrakuladipa' or 'a light of Samua's reace', i.e., descended from the ocean.³ The Munger plate of Devapala speak about Gopala as a conqueror of "the earth as far as the sea."⁴ In the Gwalior inscription⁵ of king Bhoja Pratihara, Dharmapala has been called 'Vangapati' or the king of Vanga, which according to all authoritative sources comprised the substantial portion of eastern and south eastern Bengal. Dharmapala's hold over Eastern Bengal is also evidenced in *Hudud-ul-Alam*, a Persian work written in 982-'83 A.D.⁶

¹ Verses, 1/38 and 1/50

² *Epigraphia Indica*, II, 350

³ *Ramacharitam*, 1/4. Mr. R D Banerjee holds that the Palas came from the sea (vide 'Palas of Bengal' in the *Memoirs of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. V)

⁴ *E I*, XVIII, 304f. ; *I A*, XXI, 253f.

⁵ *E I*, XVII, 108

⁶ *Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference*, Second Session 1952, p 314

It is generally supposed that Gopala's kingdom was the nucleus of the later Pala Empire. But the Pala Empire in its heyday was chiefly continental and had its coast only in south-eastern Bengal. Perhaps the chief evidence of the Pala suzerainty over coastal Bengal is supplied by the accounts of the contemporary Arab merchants who travelled along the coast of this part of the subcontinent. In their accounts they refer to either a place or a person written as Rahmi (رهمی) which inspires interests among the scholars. Examining these details ¹ Dr Hodivala, an eminent Indologist remarks as follows:

It seems to me that Rahma which is said by Masudi to have been the title or name of the king as well as of his kingdom, is to be explained by the fact that the kingdom was described in the original writing to which Sulaiman and Masudi were indebted for their knowledge as ملک لاد رهمی. This phrase is equivocal and may mean, "the kingdom of Dharma" and also "the king Dharma". The 'dal' was subsequently supposed to be a 're' and the 're' a 'wav'. The phrase was thus misread as ملک لارهمی or لارهمی kingdom of Ruhmi.²

Dr Hodivala's reading of لارهمی for Rahmi has been accepted by most of the modern scholars. Fortunately, at least one Arab geonrapher writes the name Dumi,³ which brings facts to confirm Hodivala's supposition.

The existence of wild animals like elephants and rhinoceroses the production of the extremely fine cotton fabrics, the use of

¹ E D, I 5, 13, 25

² S H Hodivala, *Studies in Indo Muslim History*, p. 5

³ Al-Idrisi, qt, Col. Yule, *Cathay and the way Thither*, I, p. cLXXXV

kauri as medium of exchange, the growing of aloe wood etc. point to the fact that the Arab geographers explored that part of the territory of Rahmi where these objects could be seen. Elliot and Dowson are probably correct in locating this place "on the Bay of Bengal about Dhaka and Arakan".¹ Al-Masudi writes, "the kingdom of Rahma extends both along the sea and the continent".² This shows that Rahma was also a marine power. Ibn Khurdadbeh clearly states that "between him (the king of Rahma) and the other kings a communication is kept up by ships (*سفن*)".³ This evidence shows that there was trade relation between Rahma or Dharmapala's Empire and overseas countries. Taking all these evidences and opinions into consideration, one can conclude that Rahma (more specifically the empire of Dharmapala) was a littoral territory having its coast in southern Bengal. As it had communication by sea with other countries, naturally it possessed a number of seaports and Chittagong must be one of them.

The Arabs especially mention at least one seaport called Samandar,⁴ which they locate in the territory of Rahma. Its hinterland, according to their narration, comprised a large territory from Kanauj to Kamrup. This port has been identified by Dr Abdul Karim with Chittagong.⁵

The above discussion, therefore, leads us to suggest that Chittagong was included in the Pala Empire, at least in the early period down to the end of the reign of Devapala, the third of the

¹ E D, I, 361n

² *Ibid.*, p. 25

³ *Ibid.*, p. 13

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 90, 91

⁵ J A S P, VIII (1963), 13 - 24

line (c. 756 - 861 A D). Under the Palas a vigorous overseas trade relation between the empire and the East Indies was established and the port of Chittagong would not have been ignored by the rulers in their overseas connection.

The epigraphic and numismatic sources give evidence of a number of ruling dynasties in Vanga-Samatata-Harikela region in the seventh and eighth centuries. A line of Kings ruling over Samatata and whose names end in Bhadra is referred to in some sources. According to Yuan Chwang, Silabhadra, the famous teacher of Nalanda was a scion of this family.¹ In the Khalimpur plate of Dharmanala, the mother of the king is described as 'Bhadratmaja', who is supposed by Kielhorn to be the daughter of one Bhadra king.² In the second half of the seventh century we come across a line of powerful kings surnamed Khadga,³ ruling over Samatata Mandala. The history of the kings is largely known from the two copperplates found at Ashrafpur.⁴ Both the plates were issued from their capital Jayakarmanta which has been identified with modern Badkamta in Comilla district.⁵ The date of the Khadga dynasty can be ascertained from the record of a Chinese Buddhist priest who reported that King Rajabhata (of the Khadga dynasty) was ruling over Samatata during the later half of the seven-

¹ Watters, *op. cit.*, II, 103

² *E I*, IV, 245, 251

³ *H B*, I, 87; Abdul Momin Chowdhury, *Dyanastic History of Bengal*, pp. 5 - 6; 141 - 143

⁴ *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, I, 85 - 91; *J A S B - N S*, XIX, 375

⁵ *E I*, XVII, 351; *J A S B, N S*, X, 87

th century.¹ The Tripura copperplate of Lokanatha.² supplies information about a line of feudatory chiefs in that locality. The Kailan copperplate of king Shridharana Rata introduces us to another line of semi-independent chiefs in Samatata Mandala, Shridharana Rata assumed the title 'Samatatesvara' (the lord of Samatata) in his copperplate grant which was issued from Devaparvata (near Mainamati Hills) his administrative headquarters. The Deva dynasty plates recovered from Salvan Vihara in the Mainamati-Lalmai ridge, have brought to light a line of powerful king whose authority is supposed to have extended over a large part of south eastern Bengal.³ In one of the two copperplates the names of the kings have been deciphered. They were Sri Santideva-Sri Viradeva-Sri Anandadeva-Sri Bhavadeva. All the rulers bear the imperial titles of Paramabhattaraka, Maharajadhiraja etc. which are undoubtedly indicative of their independent and authoritative position.⁴ As neither the grants, nor the coins and seals furnish any date, on paleographic considerations., Dr F A Khan places them in a period between the last part of the seventh and the middle of the eighth century A D.⁵ Dr A M. Chowdhury wants to assign the period of Bhavadeva to the second half of the eighth century A D.⁶ It seems that Devaparvata, in the southern Lalmai-Mainamati Hills, near Salvan Vihara, the findspot of most of the epigraphic evidences, was their administrative headquarters. It cannot be definitely said at the present state of our knowledge to what extent these dynasts in their capacity as rulers of Samatata Mandala

¹ H B, I, 86 - 87

² E I, XV (1919-20), 301 - 315

³ A M Chowdhury, *op. cit.*, pp. 144f

⁴ F A Khan, *Mainamati*, p. 19

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19

⁶ A M Chowdhury, *op. cit.*, p. 147

could exercise control over Chittagong. The subject in question requires more investigation before we settle on facts.

The Chittagong copperplate of Kantideva¹ has thrown fresh light on the obscure political history of Chittagong. This copperplate, found in Bara akhara temple in Chittagong is incomplete, the donative portion does not exist in it. Neither the date nor the dynasty to which the king belonged could be ascertained from this plate. Much of the writings have been obliterated. From paleological considerations, the period of Kantideva has been placed by Dr R C Majumdar between 850 A D and 950 A D.²

The plate refers to three generations of royal family, Bhadradata, his son Dharmadatta and the latter's son Kantideva. Only Kantideva is given full royal title, while his father and grandfather are merely praised for their prowess and religious devotion.³ Kantideva's mother Vindurati was a "daughter of a great king" (Mahabhubhrit sūta). This leads Dr R C Majumdar to opine that "neither the father nor the grandfather of Kantideva was a king, and he must either have inherited his throne from his maternal grandfather or carved out an independent kingdom for himself."⁴ Dr D C Sircar suggests an identification of Kantideva's maternal grandfather with Bhavadeva of the Devva dynasty.⁵ It appears certain to Dr A M Chowdhury that the family of Kantideva spread its influence over south eastern Bengal after the Deva rule.⁶ In the

¹ M R, November, 1922, pp. 612 - 614; E I, XXVI, 313-318

² H B, I, 135n.

³ A M Chowdhury, *op. cit.*, p. 150

⁴ E I, XXVI, 315

⁵ J A S L, XVII, 90

⁶ *Op, cit.*, p 150

view of Dr R C Majumdar, "it is very likely that Kantideva flourished during the decadent period that set in after the death of Devapala, and took advantage of the weakness of the central authority to found an independent kingdom in Eastern Bengal."¹

In this copperplate, the capital of the kingdom has been named as Bardhamanapura from where the grant was issued. Kantideva has addressed in his copperplate to future kings of Harikela Mandala. From this the clear meaning understood is that he was himself a king of that very Harikela Mandala.² The problem of the geographical situation of the kingdom of Harikela and of its identification with places in modern map provides much scope for speculation. Dr Radha Govinda Basak states that formerly the word Harikela was used to signify Samatata or Vanga.³ But in the *Majusrimulakalpa*, Vanga, Samatata and Harikela are mentioned as distinct localities.⁴ Dr N K Bhattasali holds that Harikela is another name of Vanga only, there is no doubt about this.⁵ According to I-tsing and Ten-Kaong, Harikela was the eastern limit of eastern India.⁶ This statement makes it clear that Harikela lies in the eastern fringe of the subcontinent. Hemachandra, the celebrated Jaina lexicographer of the eleventh century A D, holds Harikela

¹ H B, I, 135

² *Bharatavarsha* (Asharh, 1332 B S). For the coins of Harikela see Asiatic Society Monthly Bulletin (Jan. 1976)' pp. 9 - 10

³ *Sahitya*, 1321 B S (1914 A D)

⁴ A M Chowdhury, *op. cit.*, p. 151

⁵ *Bharatavarsha* (Asharh, 1332 B S)

⁶ J Takakusu (ed), *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as practised in India and the Malay Archipelago* by I - tsing, p. XLVi

synonymous with Vanga.¹ Rajasekhara in his *Karpuramanjari* mentions the kingdom of Harikeli Keliara as an eastern province (purva-disanga),² and locates it close to Kamarupa. Both these kingdoms are said to have been chastised by the hero of the poem. According to Yu-He, Harikela was thirty days sea journey from Ceylon and one hundred yojanas from Nalanda.³ Harikela, therefore, lay in the north eastern coast of the Bay and there was a direct sea route between Harikela and other countries such as Ceylon. It is, therefore, reasonably argued that Harikela should be located somewhere in modern Chittagong Division.⁴ Mr Pramad Lal Paul thinks that it is synonymous with Sylhet.⁵ But it looks highly improbable as Srihatta Mandala or Sylhet lies in the interior and there was little possibility of direct intercommunication between it and Ceylon by sea. Thus the geographical position of Harikela Mandala in the early period of Bengal agrees in every detail with that of Chittagong and some portions of Hill Chittagong. Similarly, one should be cautious in the location of Bardhamanapura, a city situated in the kingdom of Harikela. Bardhamanapura from where the plate was issued was probably the administrative centre of the Harikela Mandala. Dr R C Majumdar identifies it with modern Burdwan in West Bengal.⁶ Dr H C Roy

¹ *Abhidhanacintamani, Bhumikhanda*, verse 957

² A M Chowdhury, *op. cit.*, pp. 152 - 153

³ *I H Q*, XII (1936), 75n. The yojana is roughly correspond to four krosas and equivalent to eight English miles.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *H B*, I, 18. Dr B C Law thinks that Harikela 'lay wholly on the west of the river Meghna.' (*Historical geography of Ancient India*, p, 222)

⁶ *E I*, XXVI, 315

Chowdhury disagrees with Dr R C Majumdar and rightly observes that, "if this city stood in Harikela it must be distinguished from Burdwan in West Bengal."¹ Dr R G Basak, however, supposes that it is not different from the present Bardhamana situated in Radh.² Dr N R Roy refutes the view of R G Basak and expresses his own opinion that it might be situated somewhere in the Chittagong Division.³ It should be noticed that all the inscriptions related to Harikela have been discovered in East Bengal; the Radh or West Bengal has nothing to do with its location. The Mallasarul grant of Vijayasena⁴ refers to Bardhamana rather as a bhukti (province) than as administrative headquarters and there is no evidence of its being as a city during Kantideva's period. If Bardhamana is thus eliminated then to which place the credit of being the capital of Harikela belongs? The present writer is inclined to think that Harikela was a small kingdom which comprised modern Comilla, Noakhali and Chittagong, the central Chittagong being the quintessence of this kingdom. There is a well known village named Kelisahar in Patiya U. Z, which is probably the surviving trace of the kingdom of 'Harikela Keliara; The name Kolisahar is not the urbanised but Persianized form of what is vulgarly known as Kelihara, which is only the reversed form of Harikela. The locality is abound with ancient relics. Local tradition goes that the village is of great antiquity and was once the capital of a flourishing kingdom, Bardhamanapura was the port capital of principality of Harikela. This Bardhamanapura may be identified with the village at present known as Barudhan in Chandanaish U. Z, situated near the sea coast. It is not long before that the sea going craft were used to anchor near it. Now the sea has receded much from its original coast, leaving the port in

¹ H B, I, 31

² I H Q, II (1926), 322

³ Nihar Ranjan Roy, *Banglar Itihasa*, p, 482

⁴ E I, XXIII, 156-61

distress. It appears that the shrinking of ocean into itself brought about the decay of this historic site, which is now reduced to a mere village. The Sanskritized name of the city has, subsequently, been turned to Barudhan in the uncultured rural tongue. In fact the area, surrounding the proposed site of Bardhamanapura is so rich in old relics that it might hold some independent or semi-independent kingdoms successively during that period of history.

The discovery of numerous inscribed copperplates issued from Vikramapura and a large number of coins in different parts of eastern and southern Bengal give evidence of a powerful lineage of kings surnamed Chandra. Dr A M Chowdhury arranged the succession of the kings with periods of their reign as follows : Purna Chandra = Suvarna Chandra - Trailokya Chandra (c. 900-c.930 A D) - Sree Chandra (c. 950 - c. 975 A D) - Kalyana Chandra (c. 975 - c. 1000. A D) - Ladaha Chandra (c. 1000 - c. 1020 A D) - Govinda Chandra (c. 1020 - c. 1045 A D).¹ The copperplate inscription of Sri Chandra mentions Trailokya Chandra as *adhara Harikela - raja kakuda chhatra smitanam sriyam.* Dr R G Basak translates this as follows : "(Trailokya Chandra) the support (or mainstay) of the royal majesty smiling in the royal umbrella of the king of Harikela".² This shows that Trailokya Chandra, the feudatory chief of Rohitagiri (modern Lalmai range), was the mainstay of the king of Harikela who largely depended on his support. It has already been inferred that northern and central Chittagong was included in the kingdom of Harikela. Trailokya Chandra gradually increased his power to such an extent that he, ultimately, became the mainstay of the Harikela king. Dr A M Chowdhury thinks that "it was the case of a strong feudatory overpowering his weak overlord."³ Trailokya Chandra was, in a real sense, the founder of the greatness of his dynasty.

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 156f,

² *E I*, XII, 141

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 159

Trailokya Chandra was succeeded by Sri Chandra under whom "the power of the Chandras reached its highest point".¹ All the six copperplate inscriptions engraved during his reign speak of the accomplishments of this illustrious king in wonderful Sanskrit verses. He is reputed to have defeated the king of Kamarupa, humbled the ruler of Gauda, drove out the Kambojas from the frontiers and conquered almost the whole of the deltaic Bengal. The Chandras, though Buddhists, liberally granted lands and allowances to the Brahmanas and even performed some of their rites.² The power of the later Chandra rulers was greatly impaired by the invasion of Rajendra Chola of southern India.

The literary, epigraphic, and numismatic sources give evidence of some dynasties of same surnames in Arakan. The Sitthaung Temple - pillar inscription supplies us a long list of Chandra rulers³ reigning for more than five hundred years in Arakan and its adjoining areas. The first king of this lineage was Bala Chandra who was also the founder of the dynasty. This King Bala Chandra seems to be identical with King Bala Chandra in Taranath's history. The Sitthaung temple inscription does not specifically mention the territorial jurisdiction of the kings who reigned several hundred years earlier than the time of engravement of the inscription. Taranath's history states that King Bala Chandra was driven out from his ancestral kingdom. He established a new kingdom in Bangala. It might be that one of his successors conquered Arakan and established his administrative headquarters there. Taranath writes that the capital of one of his successors was Chatigrama.⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 171

² *Ibid.*, p. 183

³ ASI (1925-26), pp. 146 - 148

⁴ See *supra*, p, 54

The Chandra dynasty of Wethali of Arakan, related in the *Arakanese Chronicle*, deserves special attention regarding the political and cultural history of Chittagong. Of this dynasty, "there reigned in lineal succession nine kings from A D 788 - A D 957". The *Arakanese Chronicle*, mentions at least one king belonged to this dynasty as a conqueror of Chittagong. "The ninth sovereign is named Tsu-la-taing Tsandaya, who succeeded to the throne in the year 313 M E or 951 A D. In the year 315 M E (953 A D) he went on an expedition to Bengal (called Thuratan) and set up a stone pillar as a trophy at the place since called Tset-ta-gaung, or as commonly written Chittagong, alluding this story states to a remark of the king's (who abandoned his conquest at the request of his nobles) that to make war improper",¹ The chronicler, however, does not say whether this was the first conquest of the district by the rulers of the dynasty.

The possibility of a connection of whatsoever kind between the Chandra dynasty of Wethali and the Chandra dynasty of Eastern Bengal belonging to the same period cannot be ruled out. The kings of both the lines were Buddhists in faith but they patronized Saivism, Tantricism, Vaisnavism and even Brahmanism. Monarchs of both these lines used either Nagari (Sanskrit) or the scripts belonging to the eastern group in their coins and inscriptions. The designs of the coins issued by both these lines have such striking similarities that one may confuse the coins of one country with those of the other. But there is no evidence to prove that the two royal families were related to each other. The inscription of the Chandras of Eastern Bengal have no reference to Arakan and the inscriptions of the Chandras of Arakan in their turn have a very faint reference to their counterparts of Eastern Bengal. Modern scholars,² however, have endeavoured to establish some sort of connection between the

¹ J A S B, XIII (1844), 36

² A P Phayre, 'Coins of Arakan, of Pegu and of Burma', *The International Numismata Orientalia*, London (1882), 30 ; G E Fryer, J A S B,

Chandra rulers of Wethali and those of Eastern Bengal. In the opinion of Sir A P Phayre, the Chandras of Arakan "held Brahmanical doctrines ... They appear to have been foreigners, and it is possible that they were connected with the dynasty, which, reigned in Eastern Bengal known as the Sena Rajas."¹ But the Chandras of Arakan were Buddhists though they also patronized Saivism and the Sena Rajas were the upholders of Saivism and Vaisnavism. According to their own evidence, the Senas claimed themselves as of the Deccanese origin. So Phayre's supposition is not acceptable.

There are reasons to believe that the Chandra dynasty of Arakan and the Chandra dynasty of Eastern Bengal were contemporaneous and probably these originally belonged to one family. At later times, they split into two royal houses, one in Arakan and the other in Eastern Bengal. It is extremely difficult to say at the present stage to which one of these Chandra lineages, Chittagong owed its allegiance. According to the *Arakanese Chronicle*, Tsu-la-taing Tsandaya, one of the Chandra rulers of Arakan carried his victorious banner upto a place, which since then is named as Chittagong (? the town),² but he did not proceed farther. The Arakanese chronicler does not say from whom the king wrested Chittagong. Relying, on epigraphic evidence, Dr A M Chowdhury thinks that Sri Chandra a powerful monarch of the Chandra dynasty of Eastern Bengal was then reigning over a large territory³ Did a hostile engagement take place between these two powerful rulers for the possession of

XLI (1872), 201 - 203 ; D W Mac Dowell, *The Numismatic Chronicle* and the *Journal of the Royal Numismatic Society*, London, 6th series XX (1960), 229 - 233 ; A H Dani, 'Coins of the Chandra kings of East Bengal', *Journal of the Numismatic Society in India*, XXIV (1962), 141 ; A M Chowdhury, *op. cit.*, p. 165

¹ Phayre, *op. cit.*, p. 45

² *J A S B*, XIII (1844), 36

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 170f.

Chittagong ? The contents of the Arakanese inscription indicate that the victorious Arakanese king abandoned the project of farther conquest towards north. This naturally stimulates a question as to which circumstance forced the Arakanese king to abandon the project of farther conquest. Had the army of Sri Chandra, the lord of Eastern Bengal prevented the Arakanese from penetrating into farther north ? The solution of this problem needs more facts. The epigraphic evidence ascribes the credit of the lordship over Samatata and Harikela, which included a substantial portion of Chittagong to the Chandras of Eastern Bengal. The case is further complicated by the fact that no coins and inscriptions have so far been discovered in the district to prove the hold of the Chandras, either of Arakan or of Eastern Bengal over Chittagong.

The first half of the eleventh century was a period of catastrophe for the two dynasties. In Eastern Bengal the Chandra dynasty was reduced to submission by Rajendra Chola, a ruler of Deccan. The Chandra dynasty of Arakan was overthrown by Anawrahta, the Pagan ruler of Burma.

Anawrahta (Anuruddhadeva, 1044-1077 A D) was the greatest and the most powerful among the Pagan rulers. He is said to have made a progress through the western portion of his dominions as far as Bengal" and "exactd from the king (of that country) a promise of tribute."¹ It may be assumed that the conqueror subjugated a portion of Bengal i.e. some parts of Chittagong Division. In this place, he "left human images of stone as well as many figures of labors, harps, trumpets, cymbals; tambours, castanats, muyod drums, horns and bugles, flutes and clarionets with dancers,"² with a view in his own words, "hereafter when my great and glorious sons, grandsons and great grandsons come this way let music be performed."³ According to the chronicle, the boundary of his king-

¹ Phayre, *op. cit.*, p. 37

² Pe Maung Tin and G H Luce. (ed), *The Glass Palace Chronicle of the kings of Burma*, p. 96

³ *Ibid.*, p. 99

dom was extended westward upto "the Kala (foreign) country Pateikkara."¹ His rule was succeeded by the consecutive reigns of Sawlu (1077 - 1084 A D), Kyanzitha (1084 - 1112 A D) and Alaungsithu (1112 - 1167 A D). King Alaungsithu is stated to have undertaken a journey to the " 'Indian land of Bengal,' where he found the images set up by Anawrahta."² Harvey rightly thinks that "the Indian land of Bengal" is Chittagong.³ "The chief of Pateikkaya paid him the tribute of a daughter, and she became the delight of his old age."⁴ King Narathu (1167 - 1170 A D), the successor of Alaungsithu was an oppressive ruler. His wife was a daughter of Pateikkaya's king, who was probably a tributary ruler under him. King Narathu was assassinated by some Brahmanas of Chittagong,⁵ at the instigation of the king of Pateikkaya. With the death of Narathu the power and prosperity of the House of Pagan came to an end. These monarchs held Chittagong under their control almost continuously. The principality of Pateikkaya was not strong enough to dispute the claim of the powerful House of Pagan to which the principality itself was occasionally obliged to pay tribute.

According to the *Arakanese Chronicle*, the country shook off the Pagan yoke and regained her independence. A new dynasty was founded in the city of Pa - rim. King Gaulya, the sixth sovereign of this dynasty ascended the throne in 1133 A D. He is described in the *Arakanese Chronicle* as "a prince of great power to whom the

¹ For Geographical location of Pateikkara see *infra*, p. 78

² G E Harvey, *History of Burma*, p. 48 ; Phayre writes "(the king) visited the western province of his dominions, travelling through Arakan to the adjoining part of Bengal" (*op. cit.*, p. 39)

³ Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 30

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 49

⁵ J A S B, IV (1835), 404. He is known as Kalagya or "the king killed by Indians."

kings of Bengal, Pegu, Puggaan (? Pagan), and Siam did homage".¹ Though there is no proof of the Arakanese paramountcy over the whole of Bengal, at least Chittagong acknowledged the authority of the king. The subordination of Chittagong to Arakan is corresponded to the absence of supremacy of other royal claimants over the district. Another subsequent king, probably of the same dynasty named Midza - theng, surnamed Taing - Khyit or 'country beloved' is said to have reigned over the present Burmese dominions and a great part of India, as far as the river Narindzana and to the borders of Nepal (1180 - A D).² Sir A P Phayre remarks that this is the 'characteristic extravagance' of the Arakanese chroniclers, in regarding the achievements of the monarch. The statement of the Arakanese chroniclers may, however be taken as a proof of the Arakanese lordship over Chittagong during that time.

It is difficult to give a correct picture of the political condition of Chittagong at the time of Muslim invasion in western and northern Bengal. According to Taranath's evidence, a king named Babla Sundara "was the king of Tripura and Chittagong", sometime after the fall of Magadha at the hands of the Turks. It further states that his first son was the ruler of Arakan, the second son of the land of the Chakmas, the third of Burma and the fourth ruled a large area comprising Assam, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Kachar, and Tripura.³ The account of Taranath, however, is not supported by other written sources.

Neither the Sena rulers nor the Barman rulers seems to have extended their authority as far south east as Chittagong. But there is evidence that a few dynasts of Trans Meghna region could hold Chittagong under their sway,

The Mainamati plate of Ranavankamalla Harikaladeva (1141 Saka/1219-20 AD) states that one of his officers granted land in

¹ J A S B, XIII (1844), 40

² Ibid.

³ J A S B, LXVII (1898), 27

favour of a Buddhist monastery in the city of Sri Pattikera.¹ It is likely that as a king of both Harikela and Pattikera king Ranavankamalla also held Chittagong under his sway,

In the thirteenth century, the political scene of Chittagong is comparatively clear as we come across a line of kings belonging to the Deva family. A copperplate² dated 1165 Saka or 1243 A D has been discovered from Nasirabad, a suburb of Chittagong town in 1874 A D. The genealogy derived from this plate can be fixed as follows: Purushottama - Modhumattanadeva - Vasudeva - Damodaradeva. These rulers were vaisnavite in their faith and claimed themselves to be Chandravamsi or descendants from the moon. Damodaradeva (c. 1231 A D - ?) the grantor of the land seems to have been a powerful ruler as he is described as the suzerain of kings (sakala bhupati chakravarti), Dr R C Majumdar rightly thinks that 'Damodara's kingdom roughly comprised the territory corresponding to the modern districts of Tippera, Noakhali and Chittagong.'³ His administrative headquarters were situated possibly at Mehar, from where a number of his land grants were issued.

¹ I H Q, IX, 282 - 89.

² For full text of the inscription see N G Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 158 - 163; and Pranath Pandit, 'Note on Chittagong Copperplate', *J A S B*, XLIII (1874), 321. The great scholar and litterateur, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar helped Sri Pranath Pandit in deciphering the contents of the plate. The place of issue of this grant is not mentioned. The inscription, wherever it might have been engraved, undoubtedly, is related to Chittagong. First, it was found out in the district; secondly, the placenames cited in the inscription can be recognized though in much debased form in the current placenames; lastly, the standard of measurement of land such as drona, nala etc. are still in vogue. Needless to say that the inscription is important on various considerations.

³ H B, I, 254

The names of the places inscribed on the land grant cannot be precisely located. The highly Sanskritized names of the places such as Kasanapaundiya, Ketangapala, Dambaradama, Lavanotsavasramasambasabati, Labrapalaya, Mritacchara, Baghapokhira have been obliterated in course of time. As the inscription is discovered from Nasirabad near Chittagong town, it can naturally be surmised that the places mentioned in it were located somewhere near the findspot. A village named Mritacchara may be synonymous with modern Mithachara, not far away from the findspot. However, villages of similar names ending with suffix-chhara (streamlet) can be met with elsewhere in the district. The names of villages suffixing-pokhira (pukur, pushkarini meaning pond or reservoir) is very common in the district but not as Baghapokhira. The name Lavanotsavasramasambasabati (perhaps the longest placename in ancient India) indicates that the village was known as such for its attachment with a festival concerning salt and this village might be situated somewhere near the sea shore of northern Chittagong. This place may be etymologically related to Labanāksha, a Hindu holy spot, situated near Sitakunda. Dambaradama is perhaps survived in Dampara situated near the findspot.

The hold of the Devas over the district was interrupted by the Arakanese invasion. According to the *Arakanese Chronicle*, an Arakanese king named Alaung Phyu (599 - 605 M E/1237 - 43 A D) "made war upon the Puggan sovereign and received tribute from the king of Bengal."¹ But his contemporary Damodaradeva, according to the inscriptions, was a very powerful monarch. Therefore, the subjugation of Bengal by the Arakanese king is questionable. We may at best infer that Chittagong was divided between these two monarchs. The Arakanese king succeeded in extending his authority as far north as southern Chittagong, whereas northern Chittagong remained under the occupation of the Deva rulers. After the death of Alaung Phyu in 1243 A D Arakan again plunged into disastrous

¹ J A S B, XIII (1844), 41

condition. There was an unhappy rule of seven monarchs, covering not more than two decades. But prosperity of the kingdom returned when Meng di, said to be a very powerful ruler, ascended the throne. "The king of Thuratan or Bengal named Nga pu kheng, courted his alliance and sent presents of elephants and horses.... (His) general Radza theng kyan subdued the country along the sea coast as far as the Brahmaputra River."¹ He is also said to have subdued the Thak or Tripuras. Sir A P Phayre puts the date of the Arakanese conquest to the year 1295 A D. But he expressed his inability to identify the king of Thuratan.² This, however, furnishes an evidence of the Arakanese suzerainty over a great portion of the Chittagong Division in the last quarter of the thirteenth century.

Marco Polo (1295 A D), the noted Venetian traveller put Mien (Mranma or Burma) and Bengala under one king who was subjected to the domination of the great Kaan (Kublai Khan.)³ Prof. D G E Hall dismisses the statement of Marco as imaginary.⁴ Possibly, in incorporating Bengal into the empire of the great Mongol conqueror the traveller only exaggerated the accomplishment of his master whose rice and curry he ate for several years. But Kublai Khan's hegemony on this part of the country is corroborated by the narratives of historian Rashiduddin. He writes : "The country of Rahan (Arakan) is subjected to the Khan."⁵ If the jurisdiction of the great Tartar conqueror is supposed to be extended upto Arakan then it is not improbable that Chittagong, a subject

¹ *Ibid.*, pp 42 - 43

² The name of the contemporary Sultan of Lakhnauti is Sultan Rukunuddin Kaikaus (1294 - 1300 A D). Nga pu kheng may be the Arakanese corrupt form of Rukunuddin.

³ *The Travels of Marco Polo*, p. 204

⁴ Hall, *op. cit.*, p, 229

⁵ E. D, I, 73

province of Arakan at that time happened to be included in the empire of Kublai Khan.

The history of the district in the first few decades of the fourteenth century is almost obscure. The *Fathya-i-ibbriya* informs us that Chittagong came under the occupation of the Muslims by the middle of that century.¹

¹ *Fathya*, p. 182

Appendix 1. Rahmi of the Arab Geographers and the Medieval Principality of Ramu

Sir A P Phayre finds etymological relation between Rahmi of the Arab writers and Ramu, rather the principality of Ramu of medieval Chittagong. In his opinion, Ramu, a place in southern Chittagong is but the remnant of that powerful kingdom which is confused by the Arabs as Rahma, Rahmi or Ruhmi. The eminent scholar in his *History of Burma* says :

The name Ramu is applied to the country of Chittagaon in a general description of Bengal which is found in Purchas. These instances probably explain the name of Ruhmi, Rahma or Rahmaa given to a kingdom on the sea coast of the Bay of Bengal by the Arabian voyagers in the 9th and 10th centuries of the Christian era ...There is now a village called Ramu in the southern part of Chittagaon district....It probably represents the name by which the territory in question was known to the Arabs.

Sir A P Phayre's view is supported by Dr. R C Majumdar¹ who wants to establish an identity of these two names. Dr A Rahim also accords with their opinions. "The name Rahmi" according to him, "traces its origin from Ramu, a place in Cox's Bazar in the southern part of the Chittagong district."²

The problem of this identification lies with the fact that Ramu was never more than a principality, the existence of which can never be authoritatively put before the fifteenth century A D. It was often times under the Arakanese subjugation and practically nothing is known about its independent position in any time of history. Even if it is supposed that the kingdom might have existed in the ninth and

¹ I H Q, XVI (1940), 232n.

² A Rahim, *Social and Cultural History of Bengal*, 1, p. 41

tenth centuries A D, then it may be said with confidence that it was never so big a kingdom as to be a subcontinental power, Being a small kingdom, situated in the extreme corner of the subcontinent, it could hardly exercise such military power as to contest with some principal northern Indian powers. In fact, the description of the kingdom of Rahmi of the Arab writers hardly correspond to the principality of Ramu.

Appendix II. Chittagong and the Principality of Patikera

The existence of Sri Pattikera in the form of a vishaya (territorial unit) under Samatatamandala as early as the beginning of the eleventh century A D is referred to in king Ladaha Chandra's (c 1000 - 20 A D) land grant.¹

Dr N K Bhattasali thinks that modern Patikera or Paitkera Pargana in the Comilla District is the remains of the ancient principality of Pattikera.² Both the *Burmese* and *Arakanese Chronicles* shed light on the intimate intercourse between the kingdom of Pattikera and the kingdom of Arakan. Inter-marriages between the royal families were common. Pattikera princes and princesses figure in the romances and tragedies in Burmese annals, poems and melodramas.³ The principality remained in existence as late as the first half of the thirteenth century as it is proved by a copperplate inscription issued by Ranavankamalla Sri Harikeladeva in 1220 A D.⁴ The Burmese pronounce it Pateikkaya, as 'r' is generally replaced by 'y' in Burmese tongue. Tun Nyim, followed by Gerini supposes Chittagong to be Pateikkaya or Pattikera.⁵ The *Arakanese Chronicle* refers to this kingdom as the country of Kalas or foreigners, which bounded on the south the kingdom of Arakan. It seems that the boundary of the kingdom of Pateikkaya extended as far south as Patiya U. Z which may be the surviving trace of Burman name Pateikkaya. If our supposition is correct then it can be said that the name Harikelamandala to denote the area (Comilla-Noa-

¹ B M Morrison, *Political centres and cultural regions in early Bengal*, p.43

² R S A S B (1923), p. 32

³ B C Law Volume, II (1946), Poona, p. 216

⁴ I H Q, IX, 282 - 289

⁵ Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 326

khali-north Chittagong) was dying away from existence and a part of this kingdom was replaced by the principality of Pattikera or Pateikkaya. Though we do not come across anything that furnishes evidence of the existence of the name Patiya in medieval times but this big and populous u. z. contains ruins of ancient and medieval times. The possibility of its existence either as a pargana or a chakla or a thana during the Mughal period cannot be ruled out. During the period of the Independent Sultanate the whole area was included in what is known as the principality of Chakrasala, It is not improbable that Patikera or Pateikkaya served as the name of the place between the Gomati and the Sankha for some time, It appears from the *Arakanese Chronicle* that the kingdom of Pattikera, during the Pagan hegemony over Arakan, comprised a sizeable portion of modern Chittagong Division, Subsequently, with its decline the kingdom of Pattikera was broken into pieces and the portion of the kingdom between the Karnaphuli and the Sankha came to be known as Chakrasala, probably from the fourteenth century.

CHAPTER III

SOCIETY AND CULTURE IN ANCIENT CHITTAGONG

Section 1. Religions

Animism is the oldest form of religion in the subcontinent. Many tribesmen of Chittagong Hill Tracts, though principally Buddhists in faith still follow many traits of animism. The Hindus are in a sense animistic because they attribute animation to all sorts of objects. The worship of trees, stones, animals and reptiles indicate the survival of animistic belief in these societies. Animism is allied to both ancestor worship and nature worship. Both the tribesmen and the Hindus invoke their ancestral spirits to assist them in various areas, such as to help in begetting a issue, to avert illness, to ward off evil spirits and so on. Traits of totemistic beliefs can still be observed among the tribesmen of Chittagong Hill Tracts. The literary and epigraphic sources in Arakan¹ refer to the worship of Nats, a group of spirits, during ancient period. The Nat worship was a curious blending of tribal animism and Hindu Buddhist Tantricism. It continued to exist down to the nineteenth century among the tribesmen residing in the mountain fastnesses of Chittagong Hill Tracts.²

In ancient Chittagong, as elsewhere in the subcontinent, both Hinduism and Buddhism were predominant religions. A brief survey of condition of religions, based on meagre evidence of literary and epigraphic sources is attempted below.

¹ Tin and Leuce, *op. cit.*, *Passim*; J A S B, XXVI (1857), pp. 10,48,49

² J A S B, XV (1846), 60; Hunter, *op. cit.*, VI

A. BUDDHISM

Buddhism is still a living religion in Chittagong. Though Buddhism as a distinct and separate doctrine faced extinction in the country of its birth, the proximity of some Buddhist countries, especially Burma, did not allow the second greatest religion of the world to die out in Chittagong.

The history of Buddhism in Chittagong is connected with the growth, curious transformation and decay of the great religion of the subcontinent through different periods of history. It is not precisely known when Buddhism first gained footing in Chittagong. According to Rai S C Das Bahadur,

It was introduced in this district about the ninth century A D direct from Magadha, where the eastern provinces of Bengal, extending from Rangpur down to Ramu (Ramyabhumī) in Chittagong, were under the sway of a Rajput prince named Gopipala. The Mahayana Buddhism which about that time, prevailed in Magadha and Tibet was preached in Chittagong by Bengalee Buddhists in the tenth century A D. Chittagong, in a manner, became the centre of the Buddhism of Bengal.¹

Some indirect evidences indicate that Buddhism was introduced in the district much before the time supposed by the scholar. He is, however, correct in his opinion that in the ninth and tenth centuries A D, Buddhism, especially its Mahayanic branch, reached its heyday in this part of the country. According to the local Buddhist tradition, Gautama Buddha travelled through the district, preached sermons at several places and established Dharmachakras or the wheels of Dharma in a number of places such as Chakaria, Chakrasala, Hastigram (Haidgaon), Chandranatha, Mahamuni, Shakyapura (Shakpura) etc. which afterwards became Buddhist holy places. This tradition

¹ Qt, O'Malley, *op. cit.*, p. 65

is not more credible than the following Arakanese chronicler's narration of the introduction of Buddhism in their country.

In his (Tsanda Thuriya, 146-198 A D) time, the Bridhi Gautama 'blossoms' in the country called Kapilawot. He is invited to Arakan by the king. Gautama arrives.....He is received by the king with the reverence due to so exalted a personage. An image, being an exact resemblance of the Bridh, was permitted to be cast, and was set up at Mahamuni, where a temple was built for its reception.¹

There is no evidence to prove that Gautama Buddha ever visited the trans Gangetic region and preached his teachings there. Moreover, the Arakanese chronicler makes a gross mistake in making Lord Buddha alive in the second century A D. Again, Lord Buddha never allowed anybody to make his own image in his lifetime. We can, however, fully accord with the chronicler that during Tsanda Thuriya's reign, Buddhism might have been introduced in Arakan-Chittagong region² and "images of Buddha may then have been introduced for the first time".³ The legend of Mahamuni, a widely known Buddhist deity in the Arakan-Chittagong region, probably has sprung up at this time. What appeared to the people as Gautama must be a Buddhist missionary whose advent might have taken place during that time. This is not improbable as it is supported by another chronicle in Tibetan language written by Taranath, the celebrated author of the *History of Buddhism in India*. Taranath writes :

¹ Qt, Phayre in J A S B, XIII (1844), 35

² The chief bhikshu of Buddhist temple of Chitmarang in Chittagong Hill Tracts told me in 1969 that Buddhism was introduced in Chittagong during Chandrasurya's reign,

³ Phayre, *op. cit.*, p. 45

In these Koki countries appeared from the time of king Asoka sects of ecclesiastics, later in ever large numbers, and they became very numerous, but upto the time of Vasubandhu they were only Sravakas; after a few pupils of Vasubandhu had spread the Mahayana, it continued to exist almost uninterruptedly; from king Dharmapala there were very many in Madhyadesa who attained knowledge there; particularly at the time of the four Senas about half of the ecclesiastics assembled in Magadha was from the Koki countries. And for this reason the Mahayana had spread very much; the Mahayana and Hinayana were not always distinguishable as in the Tibetan regions. From the time of Abhayakara the Mahayana spread more and more; at the time when Magadha was conquered by the Turushkas, the scholars of the Madhyadesa came for the most part to that region and the creed was spread everywhere..... Although in all these countries Vinaya, Abhidhamma and Mahayana works were very well known, the secret mantras had become very rare with the exception of Kalachakra, the three mala sections and a few others¹

The whole region from Assam to Burma including Chatigrama is denoted under a common name Kokiland. According to Taranath, Buddhism was introduced into the Koki countries as early as the time of Asoka, gradually growing in importance thereafter. If the Suvarnabhumi of the Simhalese traditions, where Asoka sent missionaries to preach Dhamma, was located somewhere in the eastern border of India then Taranath's statement regarding the introduction of Buddhism cannot be passed over lightly. Taranath writes that the Buddhists of Kokiland belonged to the Sravaka school till the introduction of Mahayanism. According to Taranath, Mahayanism was introduced by the pupils of Vasubandhu (7th century) and "it continued to exist almost uninterruptedly" under the Palas, especially Dharmapala, "there were very many

¹ Shiefner, "Taranatha", trans. N R Ray, *Sanskrit Buddhism* pp. 77 - 78

(in Madhyadesa) who attained knowledge (of Buddhism).” The reign of the four Senas, who were inclined to Brahmanical Hinduism witnessed the conspicuous growth of Mahayana Buddhism. About this time, the Kokiland became such an important centre of this faith that about half of the ecclesiastics of Magadha came from that region. Mantrayana also is said to have spread there from the time of Abhayakara (10th century). Taranath very significantly remarks that both Mahayana and Hinayana existed side by side and it seems that they had no serious disputes because, according to the monk historian, “the Mahayana and Hinayana were not always distinguishable”. After some time, Mahayanism split into several yanas, among which Vajrayana, Mantrayana and Kalachakrayana were important. In spite of the flood of Mahayanism and its different branches, Hinayanism never vanished altogether from the Koki countries as both Vinaya and Abhidhamma “works were very well known”, in that region.

Taranath did not tell us much about the condition of Buddhism in Chittagong in that early period. “In Chatigramā, there were in that early time many Tirthika temples and Buddhist Viharas. The Buddhists of Chatigramā belonged to the Tantrik Mahayana school”,¹ Taranath’s evidence is corroborated by the results of excavation, as a large number of Mahayanic deities have been unearthed in a very wide part of the district in recent times. According to Taranath, “Chittagong was the headquarters of Buddhism after the decline of Nalanda”,²

The account of the Chinese travellers throws a flood of light on the condition of Buddhism in eastern India. I-tsing (671-695 AD) writes: “The inhabitants of all these countries (of eastern India) re-ve-

¹ J A S B, LXVII (1898), 22

² *Ibid.*

rence the three gems (evidently, the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha)... In the eastern frontier countries the four nikayas (Mahasamghika, Sthavira, Sammiti, and Mulasarvastivada Nikayas) are found side by side.¹ All the Nikayas mentioned by the traveller are included within the Hinayana school of Buddhism. It may, therefore, be inferred from the account of the traveller that Hinayana Buddhism was predominant in eastern India during his sojourn in India.

The introduction and gradual expansion of Mahayanism in eastern India is evident from the account of Sheng Chi. He writes that the king of Samatata "used to make everyday hundred thousand statues of Buddha with earth, and read hundred thousand slokas of the *Mahaprajnaparamita-sutra*. In the city there were more than four thousand monks and nuns in his time² Thus it can be assumed that along with other eastern Indian countries Chittagong also became a noted centre of Mahayanism which spread with remarkable progress as far as the western Pacific islands. Regarding the introduction of Mahayana Buddhism in Chittagong, Dr N N Law writes that "the form of Buddhism which the Pala kings of Bengal supported reached Chittagong during the ascendancy of the Pala dynasty".³ The Chandras of Arakan (788-957 A D), who held Chittagong under their sway were upholders of Mahayanic branch of Buddhism, "guarding and glorifying the Mahamuni shrine."⁴

There are material evidences of the existence of Mahayana Buddhism and allied cults in Chittagong between the ninth and the eleventh centuries A D. A large number of images of Mahayanic

¹ J Takakusu, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-10

² *Qt, HB, I*, 414

³ *I H Q*, VIII (1932), 340

⁴ *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, 50th Anniversary Publication (1960), p. 486

deities, unearthed in many places of the district¹ furnish the positive proof of the existence of Mahayanism in Chittagong. Among the Mahayanic images, we meet with Avalokitesvara, Padmapani, Manjusri, Lokeshvara or Lokanatha, Maitreya etc. All of these are different representatives of Bodhisattva. Among the Mahayanic female deities we meet with Tara or Buddhasakti, Jambhala, Basudhara or the goddess of wealth etc. Besides these, a large number of statuary Buddhas in different asanas and mudras, which have been brought to light with the help of spade, testify to the overflowing of Mahayana Buddhism in Chittagong. "All that images," in the view of Dr N N Law, "are undoubtedly reminiscent of a Mahayanic religious wave that passed over Chittagong eight or nine centuries ago."² It may be mentioned that Mahayanism of Chittagong was closely allied to that of Burma. Images of above mentioned deities have also been discovered in Burma in large number. The well known Buddhist formula, 'ye dharma hetupravahava' etc., engraved upon the pedestal inscription of the images was also "used to be widely inscribed on terracotta tablets all over Burma in Sanskrit as well as in Pali".³

From the above discussion it becomes clear that the Mahayana branch of Buddhism gained stronghold in Chittagong during the times of the Palas and the Chandras, though its introduction had taken place much earlier. This new wave of Mahayanism in the

¹ A S I (1927 - 28), pp. 184f.; I H Q, VIII (1932), 332 - 341; J A S P, V (1960), 175 - 177. A stone image of the Buddha surrounded by engraved Bodhisattvas has recently been dug out from the Karnaphuli riverbed near Betagi. A small Mahayanic Buddhist bronze image of skilful execution dug out from the homestead of the present writer in 1981 is now preserved in his household temple.

² I H Q, VIII (1932), 339

³ N R Ray, *Sanskrit Buddhism*, p. 20

ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries originated in eastern India comprising eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Nepal, northern Bengal, western Bengal and Orissa, Nalanda being its epicentre, From this zone Mahayanism spread far and wide. It cannot be exactly said how the Theravada (Hinayana) was affected by this change. Mr M S Collis is of opinion that under the Mahayanist Chandras, "Hinayanism had vanished".¹ Hinayanism might have suffered a setback at the hands of the Mahayanist rulers and preachers but its extinction is improbable. From the evidence of Taranath it is known that both Hinayana and Mahayana were practised in the Kokilands, The discovery of images of Manjusri, Maitreya, and Avalokitesvara in Chittagong testifies to the statement of Taranath as these deities were admitted to both Hinayana and Mahayana pantheon,²

The emergence and growth of Mahayana branch of Buddhism is a great factor in the religious and cultural domain of ancient India. Under the patronage of the Palas, who were zealous Buddhists, Buddhism especially its Mahayanic branch became a formidable international force. The Mahayana doctrine has several subsections (yanas). Of all the yanās the Vajrayana school flourished most in Chittagong. The discovery of multitudes of images of Vajrayanic deities and several images of Lord Buddha in Vajrayana posture in many places of the district furnishes indisputable evidence of this fact.

The flourishing state of Buddhism, especially its Mahayanic branch, gave birth to an exquisite sculptural art in eastern India including Chittagong from where a large number of Mahayanic Buddhist images have been unearthed. In 1927 A D sixtyone Buddhist images, two miniature shrines and three other fragements of images were discovered from a village nemed Jhiyari in Anwara U. Z. The

¹ J Bur. R S, 50th Ann. Publ. (1960), 487

² N R Ray, *Sanskrit Buddhism*, p. 89n.

find is said to be "the biggest hoard of images ever found in Bengal."¹ The images, according to the writer of the report on the discovery, belong to Mahayana branch of Buddhism prevalent in this part between the seventh and the eleventh century A D. Many of the images were excellently executed. The writer holds the view that, "the present find proves the existence of a local centre of Buddhist art forming a valuable link in the chain of its development and its migration to Burma. Some of the specimens show clear affinities to the bronze images of the Nalanda school, certain others to Burmese bronzes."² The image of the Buddhist goddess of wealth Vasudhara, "being a very artistic figure holding an ear of corn and a vase of jewels."³ The miniature of the Mahabodhi shrine at Bodhgaya studded with semi-precious stones, and a votive stupa crowned by two umbrellas are imprinted with superb craftsmanship.

On another occasion, Dr N N Law examines and discusses thirteen images of Buddha in different postures, procured from various places of the district.⁴ While narrating the time and artistic execution of these images, Dr Law writes :

From the palaeographic point of view, the images belong to the eleventh or twelfth century A D. Artistically, they may be attributed to Eastern School of Art which flourished in Bengal and Bihar from the ninth to the thirteenth century. In Physiognomical characteristics, specially the facial, they

¹ A S I, (1927-28), p. 84

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Narendra Nath Law, "Some images and traces of Mahayana Buddhism in Chittagong", *I H Q*, VIII (1932), pp. 332 - 341

bear a close resemblance to similar images unearthed at Saranath and Nalanda, the frontiers of Assam, and the hills of Arakan.¹

Observing the local influence on the design and execution of these images, Dr Law writes : "Though there are striking similarities between some of the images e g, those of Tara, Avalokitesvara, and Manjusri found at Chittagong and those of Nalanda, Vikrampur (Bengal) and elsewhere, there are other images which indicate the hand of local artists who had inherited the artistic tradition of the Eastern school of Art'.²

Mahayanism throughout its long history has undergone a great transformation. During the later stage, especially under the later Palas and the post Pala periods, Mahayana Buddhism and its subdivisions were partly saturated with Tantricism. Tantricism is a great step-forward toward the eventual assimilation of Buddhism into Hinduism. Hindu Tantricism and Buddhist Tantricism were so closely blended with each other that their differentiation was practically imperceptible.

The cults of Saivism and Buddhist Tantricism gained royal patronage during the Chandra rule (788-957 A D) in Arakan-Chittagong region. The discovery of Tantrik sculpture in Wethali (capital of the Chandras) shows that besides Mahayanism, Buddhist Tantricism also gained footing in the kingdom of the Chandras.³

The *Burmese Chronicles* give evidence of the existence of Tantrik Buddhism in Burma in the beginning of the Pagan rule. The Aris, with whom Anawrahta waged a relentless struggle were no other

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *J. Bur, R S*, 50th Ann. Publ. (1960), 487

than the Tantrik Buddhists.¹ Such groups of spirits as Naga, Nat etc. also belonged to Tantrik Buddhism. Under the Pagan rulers (c. 1044-1300 A D), whose territory extended upto Chittagong Hinayana Buddhism received the royal patronage. King Anawrahta (1044-77 A D) tried to subdue the Tantrik cults but he was partially successful. During Kyanzittha's reign Burma definitely changed over to Theravada Buddhism from Tantrik Mahayanism.²

With the preachings of the Siddhas or the Siddhacharyas Buddhism definitely entered into a new phase of Tantricism. Most of these Siddhacharyas were widely travelled preachers and some of them travelled in the countries beyond the boundary of the subcontinent. Most of them, however, are known only by their names. The career of these preachers is shrouded in mystery like the language of their teachings. According to the *Tibetan Chronicles* many Siddhacharyas and Buddhist Tantrik preachers were either born in or visited to Chittagong during the rule of the Chandras. Taranath writes that during the time of king Gopichandra, Balapada, a Buddhist sage of Sindhu, came to Bangala and "visited Jalandhara where flames of fire were seen in the midst of water and stone".³ The Jalandhara of Taranath's account has been identified by Rai S C Das Bahadur with Barabkunda near Sitakunda, where flames emitting out from water can still be seen.⁴ The Chandranath Hill which was originally a Buddhist place of worship might have been visited by the sage. The sage then entered the city of Chatigrama, capital of Bangala, and showed his capability of performing supernatural phenomena. Unfortunately, he was

¹ N R Ray, *Sanskrit Buddhism*, p,70

² Hall, *op. cit.*, p.147

³ J A S B, LXVII (1898), 23

⁴ *Ibid.*

suspected by king Gopichandra to be an impostor and was ordered to be buried alive. The sage remained in the pit, for twelve years absorbed in Yoga, though he was taken for dead. Ultimately he was rescued by his pupil Krishnacarya, who was on his way to Kadalikshetra.¹ "The king prayed for forgiveness which was granted to him on condition that he renounced the world and adopted the life of an ascetic."² "After staying for six months in Chatigrame in a cavern in the hills he proceeded to Ramesware in the south of India".³

About the middle of the tenth century, the great Buddhist Tentrik sage Tilayogi⁴ was born in Chatigaon (Chittagong). He was a contemporary of Mahipala (988-1038 A D) of Bengal. One of the traditions makes him known as a Brahmana of Chittagong.

¹ Chatigrama, according to Taranath, is located on the way to Kadalikshetra, which is attached with Minanath-Gorakshanath legend. If it is not an imaginary land, then it might be located somewhere in Chittagong-Arakan region, where among the Mongoloid peoples a type of matriarchal society and the predominance of females can still be noticed. In that country, Minanath was captivated by feminine charms and lost his yogic powers. Ultimately, he was rescued by his pupil Gorakshanath from the clutches of the enchantresses by some strategem.

² J A S B, LXVII (1898), 24

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ His name is given in various forms, Tilli, Tilipa, Tillipa; Tillapa, Tilapa, Tillopa, Tailopa, Tailikapada, Tilayogi etc. It is explained by the legend of his having joined in Yoga with Yogini who used to subsist in her early life by pounding sesame (tila). This indicates his attachment with the Yogachara school of Buddhist Tantricism. He was a profound scholar and theologian

who was converted to Buddhism under the name of Prajnabhadra,¹ and became a hierarch of Pandita Vihara, the famous Buddhist monastery of Chittagong. Naropa or Narotapa, the high priest of Vajrasana (Bodhgaya), "visited Chatigrama and took vows from Tilayogi".²

With the introduction of Nathism,³ Buddhist Tantricism entered into a new phase. This sect flourished most in Eastern Bengal. Nathism is a bridge between Buddhist Tantricism and Saivism. The Nathas believe in a series of teachers, the first of whom is Adinath or Adi Buddha. In fact, the Natha followers took Adinatha in place of Adi Buddha. A temple dedicated to Adinath still stands on the Mahesh Island (Mahesh Khali or Mexal of medieval European writers is named after the channel separating the island from the main land) near Cox's Bazar. The name of the island, the shrine of Adinath on a hill top and a landing ghat known as Gorakh (Goraksha) ghata near the temple indicate the connection of the island with Natha cult. Chandranatha and Adinatha became the two strongholds of Natha cult in Chittagong. The legends, traditions and literary works concerning this cult corroborate the fact that all Chittagong was once flooded with Nathism.

and wrote four Vajrayanic works and one dohakosha. The dohakosha has been published in the *Journal of the Department of Letters*, Calcutta University, XXVIII, 41-52. His Vajrayana works are mentioned in Cordier's *Work*, pp. 43, 79, 223-224, 239, 244.

¹ H B, I, 346n

² J A S B, LXVII (1898), 25

³ The origin and the development of this cult has been discussed in varying length by several scholars like Mm H P Shastri in *Bouddha Gan O Dohar Bhumika*; Dr Muhammad Shahidullah in the introduction of *Shunya Purana*; Dr Kalyani Mallik in her *Natha Sampradayer Itihasa-Darsan O Sadhan Pranali*; and Dr Shashibhushan Dasgupta in his *Obscure Religious Cults*.

Dr P C Bagchi suggests that 'Nathism originated from the religion of the Siddhacharyas, as its reputed founder was Matsyendranath'¹ or Minanath. He, according to Nathists, was the first of the Natha gurus after Siva or Adinath, from whom he learnt Yoga practice and selected, as the local tradition goes, the Mahesh Island (Maheshkhali) as a place for his meditation.

The next great Siddha was Gorakshanath, a disciple of Matsyendranath. His illustrious life became the subject of various legends and Tantrik works in divergent forms throughout northern India. In a Bangali ballad, known as *Maynamatir Gan*, composed by Bhavani Das it is stated that Chittagong was the home of his ancestors if not his.² He learnt Yoga in the Mahesh Island (Maheshkhali) before Matsyendranath, his preceptor. The coastal village of Gorakhata or Gorak Ghata in that island is believed to commemorate the saint's sacred attachment to the island. His disciple was Jalandharipada who figures in the legends as the guru of Gopichand. According to the *Tibetan Chronicles*, Jalandharipada visited Chatigrama of which Gopichandra was the king.³

Gorakshanatha, the great Natha teacher of subcontinental fame had no worthy successor and the cult of Nathism began to decline till it ultimately merged in Hinduism. According to Taranath, "at this time the Yogis (the Natha Yogis) succeeding Goraksha were very simple minded, and in order to attain honour from the Tirtha kings (i.e. Brahmanical kings) became Isvara followers.....Only the

¹ H B, I, 423

² আশু মাটি আছে কিছু মেহারকুল মগরে
নিজ মাটি আছে কিন্তু বিক্রমপুর সহরে ॥
আর আছে আইধ্য মাটি তরপের দেশ ।

চাটগ্রাম পূর্ব মাটি জানিবা বিশেষ ॥ – Bhavani Das, *Maynamatir Gan*, p.12

³ J A S B, LXVII (1898), 23. A Grunweddel, translator of Taranath's works expresses the same view.

small school of Natesvara remained in the Buddha Creed'.¹ So far as the religious transformation in Nathism is concerned, Taranath's account is very significant. Nathism so much inclined to Saivism that such modern scholars as Dr Kalyani Mallik take them for Saivas (the followers of the cult of Siva). In fact, the Nathists bend themselves more to Saivism than to Buddhism to which they originally belonged.

Undoubtedly, Nathism is a great step forward in the process of assimilation of Buddhist Tantricism with Hindu Tantricism. Sri Sital Chandra Chakravorti rightly holds that harmony of Buddhism, Saivism and Sakta cult may be seen in the lives of the Natha gurus.² Mm Haraprasad Shastri suggests that the Nathas preached a religion which is neither fully Hindu nor fully Buddhist.³ There is hardly any difference traceable between Adinath or Siva of the Natha yogis and Siva of Tantrik Hinduism. The Buddha is thus made Siva and Mahayanic goddess Tara became Parvati or Kali. Dr P C Bagchi opines that, "the followers of Nathism, in course of time, lost their monastic character and were affiliated to the Hindu society as a separate caste".⁴ They are known as Yugis to the people of the district. The term Yugi may be noticed in the *Gorakshavijaya* of Shaikh Faizullah. The term Yugi is undoubtedly a corruption of Yogi, rather Natha Yogi. In that work the Yugis are shown as weavers in their occupation. Weaving continues to be practised by the Yugi community of Chittagong. In the same source the Yugis are also called as Rauli, a debased form of Sanskrit arhat meaning priest. The term Rauli finds its mention in Manrique's account. The identification of Rauli and Yogi is quite

¹ N R Ray, *Sanskrit Buddhism*, p. 77

² *Prachi* 1330 B S (1923), pp. 228-230

³ *Prachi Banglar Gaurav*, Visva Bharati, 1353 B S (1946) p. 36

⁴ H B, I, 423

tenable as both the Natha yogis and Raulis originally belonged to Buddhist monastic order.

The Yugis, better called Natha Yogis, like the practice among the Sannyasis or ascetics, bury the deadbody instead of burning it. In doing so, they place the deadbody in the grave with bent-up legs in the posture of a new born child similar to the Mohenjo daro and Harappa fashion. This custom is peculiar to the Natha community of Chittagong.

According to Taranath's history, the Muslim invasion in south Bihar resulted in a large scale Buddhist migration towards eastern countries, called Kokilands. "The destruction of viharas by the Turushka army and the wholesale massacre of the monks"¹ caused the terrified survivors fly to Arakan-Chittagong region. This, according to Taranath, infused fresh vigour in Buddhism.

Though Buddhists of present day Chittagong belong almost wholly to Theravada, traces of Mahayana Buddhism can still be observed in the social life of the Buddhists of Chittagong without much difficulty.

A large number of Mahayanic Buddhist deities have been unearthed in Chittagong and hundreds of images still await to be unearthed from different parts of the district. Buddhist images in various asanas (meditative poses) can be seen in multitudes of temples, viharas, and kyangs scattered throughout the district. These Buddhist images in different asanas and mudras may be viewed as an evidence of Mahayana influence on the image sculpture of Buddha.

Buddhists of Chittagong pay homage to certain deities, which apparently are of Mahayanic origin. In a temple in Pahartali village,

¹ J A S B, LXVII (1898), 25

there is a giant sized statue of Lord Buddha in seated pose, This idol is known as Mahamuni ¹ and the idol is held with utmost reverence by the Chittagong Buddhists. According to the *Arakanese Chronicle*, paying religious homage to Mahamuni dates back to the reign of Sanda Thuriya (146-198 A D), who founded the shrine of Mahamuni in Arakan,² The deity has been held in adoration since then throughout the Arakan-Chittagong region. The Mahamuni image of Arakan, "as gilt image of huge proportions", is, according to early *Burmese Chronicles*, a representative image of Bodhisattva-Maitreya of Mahayanic pantheon.³ According to the local tradition,⁴ the image of Mahamuni (more probably a replica of the original one) was brought to the village of Kadalpur from Roshang (Arakan) by a bhikshu named Changa Thakur who inspite of his short stature possessed great wisdom, The bhikshu was undoubtedly of the Arakanese extraction and probably a 'Changa' in the Arakanese civil administration. The modern temple is said to have been built by a member of the family of Chakma chiefs.

Buddhists of Chittagong believe in what is called Phora which has also been mentioned in Manrique's Travels. Phora has been a widely worshipped deity in Arakan-Chittagong region. Phora is a Burmese term meaning 'The Great' or the Buddha. The term is spelt as 'Pha' in Tripura dialect and as 'Phoya' in Burmese

¹ For oral tradirions regarding the origin of the image of Mahamuni, vide Dr R B Barua's article in J A S P, X (1965), 29-30.

² Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 313

³ N R Ray, *Sanskrit Buddhism*, p. 43

⁴ The tradition in a couplet form is as follows :

ছোটখাটো চাইল ঠাকুর এত বুদ্ধি জানে।

রোহাঙ্গের মহামুনি কপলপুর আনে ॥

Changa means 'good man' see F C Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, II, 126

('r' is silent in Burmese and often is replaced by 'y'). Fr Manrique seems to identify 'Poragri' (Pora + gri, the great Pora or Phora) with Mahamuni.¹ In the opinion of Professor H H Wilson, "Phora or Phra is no doubt a corruption of Sanskrit Prabhu, a Lord or Master, the 'h' of the aspirate 'bh' is often retained alone, leaving Prahu which becomes Prah or Phra".² There are two Buddhist stupas called Phorachin, one in the village Haidgaon in Patiya u. z. and the other in the village Bagwan. The meaning of the name is not clear; probably it means the great Lord (Phora) of 'Chin' (the Mongoloid peoples of north eastern India was known as such in ancient times).

Buddhists of Chittagong worship the triratna or the three gems of Buddhism in different names. They utter 'Om Namo Phora Tara Samgha Tiratnaya' when they start on a journey, go to bed or apprehend any evil. Here Phora means Buddha, Tara means Dhamma, and Samgha retains its original meaning. Tara appears to be the same Buddhist Mahayanic deity Tara, which held once so exalted a position in Buddhist Tantricism Chittagong Buddhists still chant 'Om Tara, Maha Tara, Sarba Tara' on occasions.³ According to the *Rudrayamala*, the worship of Tara was introduced from Mahachina in the Himalayas by Vasistha who worshipped the Devi Buddhiswari.⁴ Ray S C Das Bahadur describes the deity of Tara as "a personification of Nirvana, who is identified with Sakti or

¹ Manrique, I, 122, 125n

² H J, p. 729; *Encyclopaedia Asiatica*, VII, 206

³ Although the utterance of 'Om' is forbidden in Buddhism, the term 'Om' occurs in Saranath image inscriptions; for example 'Om Namo Buddhaya', 'Om Deyodharma' etc.

⁴ A Avalon, *Principles of Tantra*, I, Introduction, (London, 1914), p. lix.

Female Principle. In Tibet she is called 'Yun Chenmo; the Great Mother : in Nepal she is personified as 'Prajna Paramita' or transcendental wisdom".¹

Chandranatha, later Brahmanicised as Chandrasekhara was originally a Buddhist place of worship.² Ruins of a Buddhist temple and deformed Buddhist Mahayanic images have recently been unearthed a few feet apart from the present Siva temple of Chandranatha. Buddhists of Chittagong still hold these places with veneration and not long before they used to pay annual visit to the ruined site of the temple. The Buddhist temple was probably destroyed either by the Saivites or by sannyasis of the Ramayat sect³ in the time when Buddhism was on the process of waning in the subcontinent.

B HINDUISM

The earliest existence of Hindu society is referred to in the *Tibetan Chronicles*, Taranath writes that "In Chatigrama there were in that early time many Tirthika temples and Buddhist Viharas".⁴ This indicates the existence of Hindu society side by side with Buddhist

¹ Qt O 'Malley, *op. cit.*, pp. 65 - 66

² *Prachi*, 1330 B S (1923 A D), pp 228 - 230

³ They were the followers of Dualistic Philosophy. According to the Ramayat doctrine, Lord Rama was the perfection of Creation. He has been deified by the followers of this Ramayat sect, named after their master. Some of the aggressive sannyasis of this sect, it is supposed, came to Chittagong and usurped the Buddhist and Nathist places of worship and renamed them after their great master and his consort. Sitakunda, Ramgarh, Ramakshetra (popularly Ramkot) and many other places owe their names to this traditional story (see *Tarikh*, p. 15).

⁴ *J A S B*, LXVII (1898), 22

society in the district. But nothing further can be known about Hinduism from the *Tibetan Chronicles*.

Nobody knows when Hinduism and Buddhism made their headway into the district. To our mind, this might have taken place along with Aryanization of the district. According to Taranath's evidence, Saivism and Tantricism sprang up during the Sena rule. But there is evidence showing the existence of the cults such as Saiva, Sakta, and Tantrik, in this region much before the period of the Senas.

The rule of the Chandras (788-957 A D) in Arakan-Chittagong region bear witness of the overflow of Saivism and Tantricism. Noticing this Sir A P Phayre remarks: "From coins still existing and which are attributed to the kings of this dynasty coupled with obscure references to their acts in the chronicles of Arakan it appears probable that they (the Chandra kings) held Brahmanical doctrines".¹ In one of their coins, "a bull, couchant, comparisond Nagari character imperfect" are engraved on one side and on the reverse side, "the sun and crescent moon and trident within a circle" are engraved. Observing the coins Captain Latter understands that, 'they were Shivite coins 'probably appertain to a time when the emblems of the worship of Shiva and those of Buddhism had something in common,.....We see in them the Buddhist triglyph represented by the trident of Shiva".² The nagari characters, trident of Siva, a bull, couchant and crescent moon, engraved in their coins undoubtedly point out their inclination toward Saivisim. After making a thorough study of the coins, chronicles and ruins of the city. Mr M S Collis reached a conclusion that Wethali (Sans. Vaisali, the Arakanese capital) "must be regarded not as an early Burmese but as a late Hindu state".³ We should not go so far as calling

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 45

² *J A S B.* XV (1846), 239; *J A S B.* XLI (1872), 202-203

³ *J Bur. R S*, 50th Ann. Publ., 1960, p. 488

the Buddhist kings Brahmanical inspite of their inclination toward Saivism and Tantricism, because Tantricism characterised some schools of both Buddhism and Hinduism during their times. In some Tantrik works god Siva and Lord Buddha are shown as identical. Suffice it to say that Chittagong, situated between eastern Bengal and Arakan also experienced the inflow of the tide of Saivism and Tantricism that were sweeping the subcontinent and south east Asia from end to end. In fact, Tantricism was so firmly established in the district that Hinayanist Pagan rulers (c. 1044-c 1300 A D) could not change the trend to any appreciable extent.

Chittagong since very old times has been noted as a centre of both Saivism and Saktism. In some of the *Puranas* and Tantrik works,¹ Chattala or Chatigrama has been mentioned as one of the most remarkable pithas or seats of both Saiva and Tantrik forms of worship. In one of these works it is stated :

চট্টলে দক্ষ্য হর্মে ভৈরবঃ চন্দ্রশেখর ।

ব্যক্তরূপাঃ ভগবতী ভবানী যত্র দেবতা ॥

In another source Lord Siva says :

বিশেষতঃ কলিযুগে বসামি চন্দ্রশেখর ।

In the Bengali source it is written as follows :

চাট্টগ্রামে ডানহস্ত অর্দ্ধ অনুভব ।

ভবানী দেবতা চন্দ্রশেখর ভৈরব ॥

The Pitha is located at Sitakunda on the Chandrasekhara Hill in northern Chittagong. The anga-pratyanga or limbs of the sacred body of Sati that fell in the district is dakshin hastardha or half of the right hand. The deities are named as Bhavani and Chandrasekhara.

⁴ The *Varahi Tantra* (ch. 31) contains some account of the Chandranath and other temples and also some other places of pilgrimage. The *Tantrachudamani* (ch. 51) has reference to the place as a seat of Tantric cult.

The myth behind the establishment of pithas has been related on many occasions in different forms. The *Mahabharata*, *Puranas*, *Kumarasambhava* of Kalidasa, *Devibhagavata* etc. threw light on the legend of Dakshayajnanasa and its aftermath. Dr D C Sircar's remarks on the origin of the pithas are very significant. He writes: "The story may have some connection with Buddhist legends regarding the worship of Buddha's corporeal relics and the construction of stupas in order to enshrine them".¹ So far as the pitha of Chandranatha is concerned, his remarks must be considered with special attention as the ruins of Buddhist images have recently been unearthed there. Dr Sircar further writes: "The idea of the pitha, associated with certain limbs of the mother goddess, seems to be essentially connected with that of the Lingam or phallus".² Thus Chittagong as a pitha tirtha of Saiva and Sakta cults became renowned all over the subcontinent.³ The Hindus believe that Lord Siva shall reside permanently on the peak of Chandranatha during Kali era. (কলৌ বসামি চন্দ্রশেখরে।)

The second important centre of Saivism in the district is the shrine of Adinath, situated in the island of Maheshkhali. The origin of the name Adinath can be examined in the light of the Tantrik works. Dr Muhammad Shahidullah is not far from the truth to say that the Adi Buddha of the Buddhist Tantrik works was transformed into Adinath (adi-first, the first of the Nathas) in the Natha cult.⁴ Adinatha may also be identified with Adideva or

¹ J R A S B, Letters, 1948, p. 7

² Ibid.

³ Muhammad Muqim, a local poet, gives an elaborate description of some Hindu holy places especially of Sitakunda in his work *Gul e Bakawali* (D U L MS sl nos 97 and 417); also see A L Sen, *The Shrines of Sitakunda*.

⁴ *Shunya Purana*, ed. C C Banarji, Introduction, p. 7

Mahadideva of the *Tantras*. In *Mahanirvanatantra*, Adinatha is stated as the first guru.

Another remarkable seat of Sakti cult in the district is Chatterswari shrine. Chatterswari, since old times, has been recognised as the protecting deity of the district, particularly the city. Similar may be the case with the Magadheswari in Magadha (? Arakan), Dhakeswari in Dhaka; Tripureswari in Tripura, Jashoreswari in Jessore; Jaikali in Calcutta and so on. Similar legends may be traced back to the hoary age of antiquity when in Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria and other countries such protecting city deities were worshipped by the people of the localities concerned. The modern temple of goddess Chatterswari is situated on a hillock in the northern part of the city. The original shrine cannot be traced at present. The shrine and the image is referred to in such medieval Bengali works as the *Rajamala* and *Maktul Husain*. The *Rajamala* gives evidence of the shrine and stone image of goddess Chatterswari, who is said to have introduced herself to the Tripura king Dhanyamanikya in a dream as follows :

চাটগ্রামে চাটেশ্বরী তাহার নিকট ।
প্রস্তরেতে আমি আছি আমার প্রকট ॥¹

The image was removed to the Tripura capital by king Dhanyamanikya (1490-1517 A D) who is said to have done it at the wish of the deity revealed to him in a dream.²

In the *Maktul Husain* by poet Muhammad Khan it is stated that one of the companions of the warrior saint Kadal Khan Ghazi, "destroyed the image of Chatterswari, and converted all to Islam".³

¹ *Rajamala*, ed, Kali Prasanna Sen, pt II, p. 30

² রসায়ন মদন নারায়ণ পাঠায় চট্টলে ।
বপে সেই স্থানে দেখে মিলিলেক ভালে ॥
উৎসব মঙ্গল বাদে রাজ্যেতে আনিল । -Ibid.

³ তান এক মিত্রে বখিলেক চাটেশ্বরী ।
মুসলমান কৈল সব চাটগ্রাম পুরী ॥ Ot Sukumar Sen, *Bangla Sahityer Itihasa*, p. 626

According to the medieval Tantrik works, Saivism, Saktism and Tantricism of Chittagong belonged to the Kamarupa school of these sects.

Section 2. Ancient Chittagong as a Centre of Learning

The *Tibetan Chronicles* supply some valuable information regarding the cultivation of learning in ancient Chittagong. Early religions everywhere in the world lay great stress on learning and education. Ancient Chittagong as a reputed centre of Hindu Buddhist Tantricism gained equally significance as a centre of cultural and intellectual activities. This is evident from the attachment of the district to some famous monasteries and reputed Buddhist Tantrik scholars.

According to the *Tibetan Chronicles*, a number of religious personages either visited to or stayed at Chittagong. The chronicler writes: 'In Chatigrama there were in that early time many Tirthika temples and Buddhist Viharas.¹ Balapa Ja, a widely travelled Buddhist sage, "visited Jalandhar² where flames of fire were seen in the midst of water and stone".³ He came to the city of Chatigrama, capital of Gopichandra. There he showed superhuman power. Shortly afterwards, his pupil Krishnacharya "visited Chatigrama" on his way to south India.

About the middle of the tenth century, Tilopada or Tiloyogi, the famous Buddhist Tantrik scholar said to be a native of Chittagong became the hierarch of Pandit Vihara. The *Tibetan Chronicles*

¹ J A S B, LXVII (1898), 22

² Rai S C Das Bahadur identifies it with modern Sitakunda-Barabkunda area.

³ J A S B, LXVII (1898), 23

states that Naratopa or Naropa visited Chatigrama and took vows from Tilayogi.¹

Atisha's *Namthor* gives indication of his attachment to Chandilah-gram, which has rightly been identified by Rai S C Das Bahadur with Chittagong. It is stated in this source that the great monk scholar "shortly before starting for Tibet had to proceed for consecrating some religious objects at the earnest entreaty of its king".²

After the downfall of Magadha at the hand of the Turkish army scholars and preachers fled toward the eastern countries (called by the chronicler as Kokilands). This gave a fresh impulse of learning in these countries. It is said that Pandit Vana Ratna with his learned companions "visited Tibet from Chatigaon".³ This indicates the saint's staying in Chittagong for some time. "In later times, Raja Babla Sundara (who exercised sway over Chittagong) sent a number of Pandits to the Siddha Cantigupta" who was then residing in the Deccan. "They returned with a large number of Mantra works to Chatigao".⁴ These evidences lead us to believe that Chittagong was a centre of Buddhist learning in early times.

The monastic system (Samgha or Vihara or Buddhist Church) has a history almost as long as that of Buddhism itself. The monastic system is one of the three most essential parts of the Buddhist religious and social life. without Vihara religious life of Buddhism is unthinkable. The *Tibetan chronicles* explicitly states the existence of Buddhist monasteries in Chittagong, where Buddhist texts

¹ *Ibid.*

² J B T R S, VII (Pt IV, 1905), 5, also see Rai S C Das Bahadur, *Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow*.

³ J A S B, LXVII (1898), 26

⁴ *Ibid.*, p, 27

and scriptures were studied by the monk scholars. The Tibetan sources mention at least one remarkable Vihara named Pandit Vihara or Pinda Vihara.¹ "In the city of Catigrama or Catigao, there was a large Buddhist monastery called Pandita Vihara. There the Buddhist pandits used to hold religious controversies with the Tirthikas (Brahmanas)".² It seems that it was the chief Vihara in this region and its fame spread far and wide. The names of some great Buddhist scholars and saints like Tilopada, Narapada, Atish Dipankara are attached to this monastery, which thus became a great centre of Buddhist studies.³

No elaborate description of this famous monastery came down to us. We are equally unfortunate in finding out the ruins of this famous monastery anywhere in the district. Rai S C Das Bahadur, a renowned Buddhist scholar and a native of Chittagong conducted a thorough search for the location of the ruins of this monastery but was unsuccessful. While narrating the result of the investigation the scholar writes ;

I tried to trace the site of Pandit Vihara in that town (Chittagong) but without success...In the modern town of Chittagongthere is an old mosque situated on an eminence. I always suspected that this old mosque (? Jame Mosque) must have been built in the early Mahamedan conquerors on the site and ruins of the Pandit Vihara of old, because it was the invariable practice of the Moslem conquerors to at once convert a Vihara into a mosque to mark their triumph over the Buddhists..... In the year 1904 on the hill adjoining the older mosque, a stone Buddha was unearthed by the P W D department while levelling a piece of ground for building an outhouse.....It seems to me

¹ *History of Buddhism in India* by Lama Taranath tr. Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya, p. 255

² *J A S B*, LXVII (1898), 24

³ *Sahitya*, 1314 B S (1907), p. 557

that this image¹ must have once belonged to the Pandit Vihara.²

The scholar thus wants to locate the site of Pandit Vihara within the campus of modern Anderkilla, where the main Arakanese fort of Chittagong and a Buddhist temple were situated. But the four hundred years of the pitiless forces of nature completed the destruction of this famous monastery to such an extent that even its name has not been mentioned either by the Arakanese chroniclers or by the foreign travellers. Rai S C Das Bahadur himself is not confident about the location and we must welcome the efforts of the future archaeologists to find out the remains of this monastery. Apart from Anderkilla other likely areas are Chakrashala-Patiya, Anwara-Deang, Ramu and Sitakunda-Mirsarai. From each of these places a large number of Buddhist images belong to the tenth to twelfth centuries have been dug out.

It is difficult to overestimate the value of the monasteries in the cultural history of ancient India. The monks held the monopoly of learning. They were the only learned men in the vast mass of illiterate population. Their devotion to learning and their tireless missionary activities helped Buddhism to reach the farthest corners of Asia and thus produced a brilliant civilization among the semi-civilized peoples. The *Tibetan Chronicles* state that the learned Buddhists, "used to hold religious controversies with the Tirthikas (Brahmanas)".³ This free engagement in religious contests was one of the notable features of the socio-religious life of the ancient Indians. The vanquished would have to be converted to the winner's sect. It was the greatest weapon of Shankara with which he struck a great blow to Buddhism and thus revived Hinduism. In Chittagong Pandit Vihara was the greatest centre of religious controversies.

¹ It is now preserved at the Buddhist temple in the city.

² J B T R S, VII (1905), 4-6

³ J A S B, LXVII (1898), 24

This religious controversy is connected with another noteworthy event of that time. This was the invention of Pan Shva or Pandit's cap (Pan 'Pandit' and Shva in Tibetan 'a cap') by the Chittagong Pandits. In the work *Pag-Sam-Jon-zang* there is "a remarkable passage" which gives the origin of the Panshwa rto-ring, the long pointed Pandit's cap.

At that time, on the occasion of a religious disputation that was held in the monastery called Pandit Vihara in the town of Chatigaon of Bangala, a Buddhist pandit, listening to the advice of an old woman, wore a cap pointed like a thorn. From his victory in the controversy, the use of the pointed conical cap spread out".¹

Rai S C Das Bahadur while commenting on the Pandit's cap writes : "As regards the use of the Pandit's cap I made enquiries from the oldest residents who follow Buddhism. They told me that they had seen it in their early years in the fifties (1850's), but since the introduction of Buddhism from Burma they have not seen its further use".²

The above discussion may presently be closed with the worthy remark of Rai S C Das Bahadur. "The name of Pandit Vihara and the story of disputation with the Tirthikas (Brahmanas) goes to show that Chittagong was a place of learning sixteen centuries ago if not earlier still".³

Section 3. Evolution of Chittagong Dialect

The dialect spoken in Chittagong, originates from Magadhi Prakrit or Magadhi Apabhramsa. It is characterized by the penetration of a large number of indigeneous and foreign words. The dialect is spoken so hurriedly by the natives of Chittagong that it becomes

¹ J B T R S, VII (1905), 4

² *Ibid.*

³ J A S B, LXVII (1898), 28

difficult to be readily understood by the people of other parts of Bengal, who often blame the dialect for their inability and dismiss it as an illegible uncouth dialect.

According to Dr S K Chatterjee, the dialect of Chittagong evolved from Magadhi Prakrit or eastern Indian Prakrit, which was current in Magadha and its adjoining areas in ancient period. Yuan Chwang, the great Chinese traveller visiting India in the seventh century A D, found uniformity in the languages of Bengal, Bihar and other parts of eastern India. The slight divergence which he observed in the dialects of Orissa and Kamarupa was of pronunciation only. This Magadhan Prakrit overflowed into Chittagong with the progress of Aryanization and infiltration of Magadhan settlers. From the evidence of Taranath and other authorities we have been informed that there was a constant migration of Magadhan Buddhists toward eastern countries including Chittagong. It is absolutely non-sensical to think that the Chattagrami dialect is merely a corrupt form of Bengali language now prevailing in the Radh region. Evidently, the Chittagong dialect along with other forms of dialects of undivided Bengal owe its origin to the same stock i e, Magadhi Prakrit, modified by local variations and influence of other forms of Prakrit. Dr S K Chatterjee in his scholarly analysis of Bengali language very aptly mentioned five distinct forms of Magadhi Prakrit or Magadhi Apabhramsa, "as spoken during the period 600-1000 A D". These five forms were Radha, Varendra, Vanga, Chattala and Samatata.¹ Out of this Chattala form of Magadhi Prakrit, the Chattagrami dialect has evolved. But though born in the same age and of the same stock, regional variations appeared among the different dialects of Bengal. While Bengali in western Bengal had undergone great changes through different periods and reached the present stage, the Chittagong dialect has not been subjected to such changes and remained a mere spoken language of the children of the district.

¹ H B, I, 377; also S K Chatterjee, 'A History of the Aryan Speech in India', C R LX (1936), 285

In no other dialects of undivided Bengal the trace of early medieval Bengali is so apparent as in the Chattagrami dialect. Even some of the vocables of the Charyapadas have been retained in the dialect.

Though the Aryan speech is predominant in the dialect, the form of speech of earlier settlers could not be completely wiped out from the dialect. The influence of Tibeto-Burman and Mongoloid races can be observed in pronunciation. Dr S K Chatterjee very appropriately observes : "In phonetics and phonology and syntax, if not so much in morphology, Chittagong Bengali undoubtedly shows a strong influence of the earlier languages which have receded before Bengali".¹ In a word, Chittagong dialect is an interesting field for the linguists and philologists.

¹ J R S B, Letters, XVI (1950), 331-332

CHAPTER IV

EARLY MUSLIM CONTACT WITH CHITTAGONG

Our knowledge about the early Muslim contact with Chittagong is mainly derived from fragmentary evidences of the *Arakanese Chronicles*, medieval Bengali works and the accounts of the Arab geographers. The Muslims first came into contact with the Indian subcontinent through trade and commerce. From the times long past, spices, cotton fabrics, precious stones, minerals and other commodities from South and South east Asia were of great demand in the oriental and European countreis and the Arabs as a seafaring nation almost monopolized this trade between the South and South east Asia on the one hand the oriental, north African and European countries on the other. The Arab merchants carried goods to the ports of Masqat and that of Siraf on the two sides of the Persian Gulf, Basra,¹ Yemen,² Jiddah, Qulzum (Suez),³ for exchange with the goods of the merchants of the Middle Eastern, Central Asian, north African and European countries. For about eight centuries they monopolized the trade between the East and the West.

No one knows when Chittagong, the easternmost part of the subcontinent first came into contact with the Arab merchants and voyagers, but the evidence of coins and chronicles, vocabulary and the placenames, ethnology, travelling accounts clearly indicate

¹ Auguste Toussaint, *History of the Indian Ocean*, tr. J Guicharnaud, (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 48

² Yakubi, 'Kitab ul Buldan', qt Nadvi, *op. cit.*, p. 49

³ Ibn Khurdadbeh, qt Toussaint, *op. cit.*, p. 49

the relation between Chittagong and the Arab ports as early as the eighth century and it continued down to the coming of the Europeans in the first quarter of the sixteenth century.

Fortunately, the most valuable evidence of the trade relation between Chittagong and the Arab ports is supplied by the Arab geographers themselves. Those were the days of the Arab supremacy in navigation and external trade. The Arab geographers, therefore, took upon themselves the responsibility of collecting facts about different ports and coasts as also commodities available in the eastern lands. In so doing, some of them have referred to a kingdom known as Ruhmi. We have elsewhere shown that 'Ruhmi' of the Arab writers may be identified with the kingdom of Dharmapala (c. 770—810 AD), who exercised sway over south eastern Bengal.¹ The Arab writers also mention a port town named Samandar which has been identified by scholars with Chittagong.²

The *Arakanese Chronicles* trace the Muslim contact with this region back to as early as the eighth century A D. It states : "In his (king Maha-taing Tsan-daya, 788-810 A D) time it is stated that Several Ku-la or foreign ships, were wrecked upon the island of Ranbyi, and the people in them, said to be Musulmans were sent to Arakan proper where they were settled in villages."³ The Arab mariners often suffered shipwreck off the coast of this region and took shelter in neighbouring countries, where they established themselves to live in intimate relations with the native people. There are some places known as 'Dinga bhangar bill, 'Dinga bhangar char' lying scattered in the district and these, according to local tradition, commemorate the unfortunate incidents that happened to the Arab sailors.

The *Arakanese Chronicle* gives reference to the travelling of Muslim mystics in that country during Pagan period. The *Chronicle*

¹ See *supra*, p. 57

² *J A S P*, VIII (1963), 13 - 24

³ *J A S B*, XIII (1844), 36

while referring to an incident during king Anawrahta's rule (c. 1044-c 1077 A D) states : "When he (an attendant of the king) entered the forest he found a fakir, possessed of mystic wisdom, dead with the marks of violence upon him."¹ This event proves that not only the Muslim merchants but also saints and dervishes used to frequent this part of the coast of the Bay as early as the eleventh century.

The exploration of the Arab navigators was followed by the establishment of trade connection between Chittagong and the Arab countries. The letters written by Mawlana Muzaffar Shams Balkhi to Sultan Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah (1390 - 1410 A D) refer to Chatgaon as a port from where pilgrims carrying vessels used to go to the Arab ports.² The Arab geographers and voyagers refer to this trade relation one more than on occasion in their nautical treatises. One of the noteworthy Arab geographers who refer to the Arab trade contact with Chittagong, is Suleiman Mahri of Hadramaut (c.900AH). In one of his books he gives a list of sea routes frequented by Arab sailors. In this list, he mentions one route from Diu to Shatijam (Chittagong) and another from Chittagong to Arabia.³ In chapter vii of his *Tuhfat al Fakul fi Ilm al usul* (Paris edition), he discusses the voyage from Diu to Bengal i.e, Chittagong and from Chittagong to the Arabian coast.⁴ Another book on navigation with reference to a sea route to Chittagong is *Muhit*, a Turkish work written by Sidi Ali Chelebi in 1554 A D. While narrating his twenty eighth voyage from Diu to Shatijam⁵ in Bengal, he gives an account of the journey as a skilled navigator and a learned geographer. He warns the navigators against the submerged rocks and shoals lying near the coast of Chittagong.

¹ Tin and Luce, *op. cit.*, p. 75

² J B R S, XLII (1956), 13 - 15

³ Nadvi, *op. cit.*, p. 133

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145

⁵ J A S B. V (1836), 466-467

The commercial communication between Chittagong and the Arab countries is profusely described by the Europeans especially the Portuguese. From their accounts we come to know that a lively trade was carrying on between the Arab peninsular ports, Persian Gulf ports and Chittagong port at the time of their coming to Bengal. The early Portuguese visitors saw the port of Chittagong crowded with Arab sails. Duarte de Barbosa, Pyrard de Laval and many other European voyagers noticed Arab merchants staying in Chittagong on trade purposes. Barbosa (1516 A D) states that the merchants of the Middle East countries staying in Bengala, "possess great ships after the fashion of Mecca".¹ Joao de Coelho and Joao de Silveira, the two Portuguese commanders visiting Chittagong in 1517-18 A D saw many Arab ships anchoring in the harbour.² Their attempts to obtain commercial privileges from the rulers of Chittagong ended in failure chiefly owing to the Arab opposition.

Political instability in the country often made the Arab merchants strongly desirous of gaining territorial power. Joao de Barros, the celebrated Portuguese historian produces testimony of such a bold project. He writes :

One hundred years before the Portuguese visited Chatgaon, a noble Arab arrived there (Chittagong) from Adan (Aden), bringing with him two hundred men. Seeing the state of the kingdom he began to form ambitious projects of conquest.....He was promoted to the command of the king's bodyguard. Soon afterwards he killed the king, and himself ascended the throne.³

This account supplies the direct evidence of the Arab contact with Chittagong in the first quarter of the fifteenth century A D. From

¹ Duarte de Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, trans. M L Dames, II, 135-136

² Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 28

³ De Barros, 'Da Asia', qt and Tr. Dr H Blochmann, *J A S B*, XLII (1873), 287

the account of De Barros it appears that the Arabs not only came as traders but exercised influence upon the political affairs in the district. They would even go as far as to make it a base for territorial gain. O Malley remarks : "The commercial activity of the Muhammadans (which in the author's view dates back to the twelfth century) paved the way for Musalman domination in the district."¹

The genealogical tables of some Muslim families of Chittagong said to be the descendants of Arab immigrants furnish another valuable evidence of the coming of the Arabs as settlers in Chittagong. From the genealogical table,² contained in the *Maktul Husain* by a local poet named Muhammad Khan we come to know that Mahi Sawar, his forefather was born in the Siddique family of Arabia. It is stated that he came to Chittagong by sea, riding on the back of a fish. Like Muhammad Khan, Abdun Nabi, another local poet proudly claims himself as a descendant of the Siddique family.³ Muhammad Chuhan, a local poet informs us that Munshi Zafar, his patron, belonged to the holy lineage of Khalifa Abu Baqr Siddique.⁴ Instances of similar cases may be cited in large number from medieval puthis.

The local historian Maulvi Hamidullah Khan refers to an instance of medieval communication between Chittagong and Arabia in his *Tarikh-i-Chatgam*. He writes :

One Alfa Husaini of Baghdad, a descendant of Fatimah (the daughter of the Prophet), a great merchant, who possessed much wealth and many slaves and owned fourteen ships, had repeatedly been to Chatgaon and he used afterwards to go to Bengal, where he urged the king to conquer the district. He also assisted him with ships and material, and thus raised the

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 20

² *Sahitya Patrika*, 3rd year, No. 1

³ *P P*, p. 2

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 14

standard of victory (Nusrat) in that country. Husaini, for this reason, became the king's son-in-law and lived honoured and distinguished.¹

The wealthy and respectable Arab merchant, described in this passage possessed a good number of trading vessels by which he frequented the port of Chittagong. He exerted a great influence upon the royal court of Gaud. The historian adds that the descendants of this Arab merchant are still living in Chittagong.² Can this Alfa Husaini be identified with Alfa Chan of De Barros' account who has been stated as an influential Muslim noble in the royal court and who intervened in favour of the Portuguese of Chittagong? There might be some sort of relationship among the three personages viz; the noble Arab of De Barros' account, Alfa Chan³ in the same source and Alfa Husaini of Hamidullah Khan's *Tarikh*. Both the Arabs (the nobleman of De Barros' account and Alfa Husaini of *Tarikh*) made the district the pivot of their ambitious attempts at the royal court.

Besides, there is the numismatic evidence to prove the Arab contact with Chittagong as early as the Abbasid period. One Abbasid coin has been discovered in the ruins of Mainamati⁴, not far from Chittagong. It may reasonably be assumed that the coin was brought there by the Arab traders through the port of Chittagong.

The ethnological testimony of the Arab contact with Chittagong is no less evidential. According to 1901 census report,⁵ the people claiming to be descendants of Shaikhs and Sayids were 954, 294 and 9000 souls respectively. Most of the so-called Arab des-

¹ 'Tarikh', qt and tr. Blochmann, *J A S B*, XXXXI (1872), 337

² *Tarikh*, p. 18

³ *De Barros*, Dec. IV, Liv. IX, Cap I, p. 473

⁴ F A Khan, *Recent Archaeological Discoveries in East Pakistan*, Karachi, p. 11

⁵ O'Malley. *op. cit.*, p. 59

cendants are residing in the city, or the place within the radius of twenty miles of the city. The fair, tall and stately figure, round shaped head with glowing eyes set on it, bird's beak like nose, narrow and long face with pressed lower jaw, make the person appear as of probable semitic origin.

The infiltration of Arabic vocabulary in Chittagong dialect testifies to the close relation that prevailed between Chittagong and Arabia. Perhaps, the people of no other district in the subcontinent except Urdu and its allied languages speaking areas, use more Arabic and Persian terms than the people of Chittagong. A long list of Arabic vocabulary which is in use in the district can be put into order without much difficulty. However, some of the Arabic terms, which are not commonly used in other regional dialects of Bengal but frequently used by the people of the district may be cited as examples. Thus the words used in Chittagong dialect such as qias (قياس - commonsense), akkhora (أكخور) - a small deep pot with a rim), khada (قدح - a large earth made drinking vessel), khira (خيار - a cucumber), ruzu (رجوع - refer, appeal), kothi (كوة - a water vessel), atta (وقت - time), mouza (موجة - wave), saat (ساعة - an hour, time), lafza (لفظ - word), aiom (أيام - days) bada (بيض - egg) khari (خور - creek), khal, khali (خالیج - channel).¹ bahr (بحر - river, sea), (kum قاموسى an ocean)² have their origin in Arabic vocabulary.

The Arabs were born traders, and after the introduction of Islam they became a great maritime people. Their profound knowledge in navigation, in the science of latitude and longitude, in astronomical phenomena and in the geography of the countries they visited, made them unrivalled in mercantile activities in the Indian Ocean for

¹ According to Allama Nadvi (op. cit., p. 7), both the Arabic terms khour and khaliij signify a 'bay'

² In the view of Allama Nadvi (op. cit., p. 4), "it is derived from. قوس (qums) which means 'to drive into'".

centuries together. So deep was the mark of their influence on the art of navigation and the manufacture of marine craft that it can be clearly observed even to this day. The term Jang nauka¹ is still used by the Chittagonians while distinguishing a type of boat. Ghurab (غرّاب), khalu,² bajra³ are some other names of water craft familiar in Chittagong.

Not only the watercraft but the men associated with navigation bear testimony to the Arab contact with Chittagong. Such Arabic term as malla,⁴ khalasi,⁵ dari (دارى), sari, nongar (نگر)-anchor etc. found an easy access to Bengali language and thus enrich its maritime vocabulary.

Some of the placenames of the district which are emphatically supposed to be of Arabic origin, also indicate the Arab contact with the district. Chittagong has been named by the Arabs as Shatijam, meaning the delta of the river Jam, the Arabic name of either Jamuna

¹ Ibn Battuta uses the word جنك (junk) to signify a big ship. "The word Junk may be connected with (a Turkish word) the original meaning of Junk probably being "shell" (C R, (Sept. 1936), 290)

² The word derives from خلية (Khaliyat) meaning bigger boats or ships (Nadvi, op. cit., p. 5)

³ The word is probably derived from بوزى buzi, a Persian term meaning boat.

⁴ ملح (milh) means salt, saltish (Nadvi, op. cit., p. 6). Malla (boat-man, crew) and malangi (manufacturer of salt), the two words are derived from the root word 'milh' meaning sea.

⁵ Allama Nadvi gives the derivation of the term as follows: "Khalas" in Arabic means a combination of white and black and Khalasi is a child born of a black mother and a white father or vice versa. The Arabs usually employed Abyssinian women as household maids. Children born of such slave girls were very often enrolled for service on ships and were called 'Khalasi' (op, cit., p. 7)

or Ganga. The harbour and town of Chittagong with its extensive suburbs was also known as Bandar to the Muslim merchants in medieval times. Bocarro¹ and some other Portuguese historians mention Chittagong as 'Bandel de Chatigao'. Bandar, which was corrupted by the Portuguese as Bandel, is an Arabic Persian term meaning mart or emporium. It is defined in the *Hobson-Jobson* as "a landing place or quay; a sea-port; a harbour; and sometimes also a custom house."² It is found in many names used by the Arabs, e.g., Barr-el-Banadir in east Africa, Bandar Menavam, Bandar peng-garam in Malaysia, Bandar Al-Kayran, Bandar Nus, Bandar Abbas, Bandar Raysut, and others round the coasts of Arabia. A glance at the index of a modern atlas will show how many Bandars survive today all round the Indian Ocean. In the *Ain-i-Akbari*, the port town of Chittagong has been mentioned as Bandar Chatgaon. In the medieval both the port of Chittagong and the Port of Deang were known period, as Bandar. There is still a municipal ward named Bandel near the river side which is the remnant of the name by which the port town was made known to the merchants of Europe and the orient. the name Bandar for the medieval port town of Diang is still current. There is an offshore island in Cox's Bazar District known as Jinjira which it is thought derives its name from Arabic term جَزِيرَة meaning island. Similar view is expressed about Anwara or the land of light (noor). Another place is Sarandip (in Boalkhali u. z.), an Arabic term meaning first land. It is believed by the local folk that this was the place where the Arabs established their first settlement. Near this village there are two mouzas named Sayidpur and Sayid Khali in the same u. z. These villages are supposed to have relation to the settlement of the Sayids or the Arab origin respectable Muslims. The placenames such as Alkaran, Sulk Bahar (Sulk-ul-bahar) etc. show the Arab influence on the medieval geography of Chittagong.

¹ H J, p. 58

² *Ibid.*, p. 127

The principal cause of the decline of the Arab trade and commerce in Chittagong was the hostility of the Portuguese pirates. The Portuguese sailors began coming to Chittagong in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. The appearance of the Portuguese sails in the Indian Ocean hindered the Arabs from carrying trade with the eastern countries. Plundering was the first word of the Portuguese traders and the Arab sails were its first victims. "The Portuguese captains made it their business to sweep the Muslim merchantmen out of Indian waters".¹ On one occasion a Portuguese fleet was directed that it "might cause that no ship of Moores should lade 'commodities at some specified places' but with customs to them and passe from them (the Portuguese)".² However, the superiority of the Portuguese over the Arabs in certain matters cannot be denied. Professor D G E Hall points out : "In the Eastern Seas they (the Portuguese) excelled the Moors in both fighting and navigating their ships, and the ships themselves were in every way superior to those of the Arabs, which were built for sailing only under favourable monsoon conditions".³

¹ *H B*, II, 353

² *Purchas*, V, 582

³ Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 239

Appendix 1. Chittagong and Samandar of the Arab Geographers

The Arab writers mention a port town named Samandar which attracts the notice of scholars in recent times. Ibn Khurdadbeh is the first writer to refer to this town. He says : From Kanja to Samandar is ten farasangs. Rice is produced here. Aloe is imported to this place from a distance of fifteen or twenty days journey through sweet water from Qamrun and other places. From Samandar to Urnashin (Urasir in *E D*, I, 16) is twenty farasangs.¹ Al-Idrisi, another Arab writer, supplies more details about this city. He writes :

From Kanja to Samandar is thirty miles. Samandar is a large commercial town where good profits are made. The inhabitants possess much merchandise and goods. Many come and go to that place. It is one of the dependencies of Qannawj, the king of these cities. The city of Samandar is situated on a khawr that reaches it from the city of Qashmir. Grains, plenty of rice and corn, are available in this city. Aloe wood is brought here from the country of Karmut, fifteen days distance by a river of which the waters are sweet.....Opposite to this city there is a big island and the distance between the two is one day. This island is well-peopled and frequented by merchants from all countries. From here to the island of Sarandip is four days. To the north at seven days distance from Samandar is the city of Qashmir the inner celebrated throughout India, which is under the rule of Qannawj.²

¹ Ibn Khurdadbeh, qt & trans. M H Nainar, *Arab Geographer's Knowledge of Southern India*, p. 81

² Al-Idrisi, qt & trans. Nainar, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90. This appears to be more satisfactory translation than that of Elliot and Dowson.

Regarding this city, Elliot and Dowson only translated the passage from the original text and did not go beyond that. Mr M H Nainar corrected some errors in Elliot's translation but he was unable to locate the city on modern map. Dr A H Dani suggests that "the port town was somewhere in the Bengal coast more probably at the mouth of the Meghna."¹ Dr Abdul Karim discusses the subject in detail that leads to the conclusion that Samandar is identical with Chittagong.² Our present discussion is based on his arguments.

The river which is said to have its source in Kashmir and on the creek of which the city of Samandar stands is apparently the Ganges. That Chittagong stands on the khawr³ of the Ganges is evident from other sources. De Barros' map distinctly shows the situation of Chittagong on the left bank of the Ganges at its outfall. Abul Fazl places Chittagong just at the mouth of the eastern branch of the Ganges.⁴

Dr A Karim thinks that the big island which is stated to be situated opposite to Samandar is the island of Sandwip. The account of the Arab geographers makes it clear that Samandar was situated not only on the creek of the Ganges but also on the sea coast. Al-Idrisi's description of the island of Sandwip as "well-peopled and frequented by merchants from all countries" is corroborated by the similar approbation by several foreign travellers of medieval period.

The distance of different places from Samandar, as stated by our esteemed geographers, is not always factual. The accounts of both Ibn Khurdadbeh and Al-Idrisi seem to be right in giving about fifteen days journey by river from Qamrun or Karmut (Kamrup) to

¹ *Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference*, first session, 1951, Karachi, p. 191

² *J A S P*, VIII (1963), 13 - 24

³ خور means inlet or creek. Elliot and Dowson translated it as river

⁴ *Ain.*, II, 133

Samandar (Chittagong). It may be recalled that Ibn Battuta gives the same period of journey of Assam to Sadkawan (Chittagong) by river.¹ But seven days distance from Samandar to Kashmir by any route is not factual. Similarly, the distance from Sandwip to Chittagong might be one day's journey but the distance from Chittagong to Ceylon (Sarandib) should be more than four days even in consideration of the modern improved sea voyage.

About, the political status of Samandar at that time, Al-Idrisi writes "it is one of the dependencies of Qannawj, the king of these cities". Here Qannawj (or Kanauj) stands for a northern Indian power who held the port under its sway. Kanauj attained the dignity to be the most important capital of northern India at that time. This suggests that Rahmi or the kingdom of Dharmapala, who held supremacy over Kanauj also extended his authority as far as Samandar.

According to Al-Idrisi's narration, "Samandar is a large commercial town where good profits are made. The inhabitants possess much merchandise and goods. Many come and go to that place". Since very early times, Chittagong has been described as a town of great commercial importance. Later foreign travellers praised Chittagong almost in the same manner as our Arab geographers had done before. Of the commodities available at Samandar Al-Idrisi writes, "grains, plenty of rice and corn are available in this city". That Chittagong was a bowl of rice, which was used to be exported from that place can be read in the account of the European travellers. Aloe wood is not a native product of Samandar but brought here from Kamrup. From the authority of Abul Fazl we came to know that Sylhet was renowned for aloe wood.² This aloe wood was usually carried down by river to Chittagong for re-export.

¹ Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa*, trans H A R Gibb, p. 271

² *Ain*, II, 137

Dr Abdul Karim makes an attempt to trace the etymological meaning of the name of Samandar. He quotes from Steingass's *Comprehensive Persian English Dictionary* as follows: "سَمَنْدَل سَمَنْدَر, said to be derived from sam, fire and andarun (within) Samandar; name of a place in Hindustan from which aloes is brought." Thus "the actual word is Samandarun meaning 'fire within'". Dr Karim refers to Taranath in support of his identification of the city with Chittagong. "In Chatigrama there was Jalandhara in which flames of fire appeared mixed up with water". It is, therefore, very probable that the Arab geographers changed the word Jalandhara into Samandar, both etymologically and in actual sense.

Appendix II. The Arab Prircipality in Chittagong

The discussion on the early Muslim contact with Chittagong may give rise to a problem whether the Arab contact with Chittagong led to the establishment of an independent Arab colony in the district. To give a definite reply to this much debated problem is undoubtedly a difficult task. Recently, some scholars, for example Dr A H Dani¹ Dr Enamul Haq² and others express their opinion that the Arab settlers succeeded in carving out an independent principality in Chittagong. Speaking in support of their view, they refer to the name or place called 'Thuratan' in the *Arakanese Chronicle*. Thuratan is Arakanese corrupt form of Suratran, the Sanskrit version of Arabic term sultan. So the Thuratan must have referred either to a Muslim king or to a Muslim dominion. The first Muslim conquest of Chittagong, according to the historian Shihabuddin Talish, took place in the middle of the fourteenth century. So, the reference to Thuratan before the Muslim conquest of Chittagong is significant, and may reasonably point out the existence of a Muslim principality in Chittagong before its conquest by Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah. But there is no positive evidence to confirm this proposition. Neither the accounts of the Arab geographers nor the narratives of the Indian historians supply evidence to corroborate the existence of a Muslim principality in Chittagong. The Portuguese sources also do not confirm the opinion

¹ 'Early Muslim contact with Bengal', *The Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference*, 1951, p. 195

² Enamul Haq and Abdul Karim, *Arakan Rajsabhay Bangla Sahitya*, p. 3; Enamul Haq, *Muslim Bengali Literature*, p. 5; Enamul Haq, *Purva Pakistane Islam Prachar*, p. 17

of the scholars. The only evidence in favour of the Arab principality is the Muhammad Khan's pedigree, where it is stated that Mahisawar, one of his ancestors and a saint of Arab origin, governed Chittagong for some time.¹ But Muhammad Khan's pedigree, whichever importance may be attached to it is based on tradition and the historicity of the statement can be called in question. With our deep regard for the authority of the above mentioned scholars we express our inability to accept their opinion. We may at best say that the Arabs made the port of Chittagong either a stopping place or a commercial station, convenient for the purpose of trade in the neighbouring areas. Their wealth, derived from extensive trade and commerce might infuse much prestige and influence in them but as they were chiefly trading people, they lacked in men power and military strength in carving out an independent principality in Chittagong. The reference to the Arab nobleman in the works of De Barros and Mv. Hamidullah Khan gives evidence of the ambitious projects of the Arabs who might have sometimes become so powerful as to make themselves desirous of the Bengal throne, but this does not prove the existence of an independent Arab principality in Chittagong. We need more concrete evidences before we come to a definite conclusion.

¹ S P (1371 B S), pp. 160f.

CHAPTER V

MUSLIM CONQUEST OF CHITTAGONG

The first available recorded account relating to the earliest Muslim conquest of Chittagong is found in the *Fathya-I-ibbriya*, written by the mid-seventeenth century historian Shihabuddin Talish. The historian writes :

In bygone times, one of the sultans of Bengal named Fakhruddin fully conquered Chatgaon, and built an embankment (al) from Chandpur opposite the outpost of Sripur to Chatgaon. The mosques and tombs which are situated in Chatgaon were built in Fakhruddin's time. The (existing) ruins prove it.¹

This shows that the conquest of Chittagong by Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah was retained in the memory of the Muslims till Talish's time.

The celebrated Moorish traveller Ibn Battuta states that he entered Bengal through a port named by him as 'Sadkawan'. He writes that the king of the place was Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah, Ibn Battuta's Sadkawan has been identified with Chittagong and on the basis of this identification, it may be adjudged that Chittagong was a part of the independent Muslim kingdom of Sonargaon under the absolute control of Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah.

There is an indirect evidence in Afif's *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, which proves that Chittagong was brought under Muslim control toward the middle of the fourteenth century. While describing Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq's second invasion of Lakhnauti, he says that after the overthrow of the dynasty of Sultan Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah from Sonargaon by Ilyas Shah in 752 A H (1353 A D), Zafar Khan,

¹ *Fathya*, p. 182

Fakhruddin's son-in law fled by sea and reached Delhi via Thatta.¹ The fugitive must have gone to Thatta through the seaport of Chittagong, which was then held by the Muslim rulers of Bengal. The specific evidence of Shihabuddin Talish read side by side with the evidences of Ibn Battuta and also of Shams-i-Siraj Afif leads us to suggest that Chittagong was brought under first Muslim rule by Sultan Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah.

The date of the conquest of Chittagong by Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah is not stated in Talish's account. But a clue of it is supplied by Ibn Battuta. He writes : "When Fakhruddin saw that the kingship had passed out of the hands of Nasiruddin's descendants (he was a client of theirs) he revolted in Sadkawan and Bengal and made himself an independent ruler."² Numismatic evidence proves that Fakhruddin held the possession of the kingdom of Sonargaon in 739 A H (1338 A D). Ibn Battuta's statement points out that Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah brought Bengal (rather the kingdom of Sonargaon) and Sadkawan under his control at the same time. So, the conquest of Chittagong by Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah may conveniently be put in or around 739 - 40 A H/1338 - 39 A D.

From whom Chittagong was captured by Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah is difficult to ascertain. Both the *Arakanese* and *Tripura Chronicles* suggest a line of inquiry about the conquest of Chittagong by Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah. The narration of the contemporary events in the *Tripura Chronicle* suggest that the authority of the Tripura rulers might not have been extended upto Chittagong proper though a portion of northern Chittagong Hill Tracts was brought under the Tripura rule. The central and southern Chittagong was probably being ruled by Arakan, which was gradually losing its importance as a strong territorial power in the middle of the fourteenth century. According to the *Arakanese Chronicle*, after the death of Meng-di (late 13th century),

¹ E, D, III, 304

² Ibn Battuta, pp, 267 - 268

one of the powerful sovereigns of Arakan, there "followed internal dissensions throughout a long and unhappy period, till exhausted by the struggles of contending factions, the ancient kingdom of Arakan fell before the newly risen fortunes of the successors of A-laung Phra in the Burmese empire".¹ Thus the weak political condition of the kingdom gave a good chance to Sultan Fakhruddin to make a speedy conquest of Chittagong at least upto the right bank of the Karnaphuli.

According to Ibn Battuta, Sultan Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah used to show great honour to the Muslim saints, Ibn Battuta writes that "the affection of Sultan Fakhruddin for the Faqirs went so far that he placed one of them as his viceroy at Sadkawan. This man was called Shayda (mad for love)".² The construction of mosques for prayer and tombs on the grave (the ruins of which existed till Talish's times), point out that the sultan was not only a devout Muslim but also a prolific builder.

The Muslim conquest of Chittagong produced far reaching effects on the course of history of Chittagong. It was not merely a political conquest but it had its cultural and religious aspects. Chittagong now ceased to be exclusively a concern of Arakan and Tripura. With this conquest, its age-long isolation was broken. Henceforward, the Bengal rulers became more and more aware of the strategic importance of the area. It now became a focal point in the political, social, and more important in the economic history of Bengal. The conquest of Fakhruddin made the district an integral part of the Bengal sultanate. In the time that followed, the Muslim rulers of Bengal counted Chittagong as an inseparable part of their dominion and tried their best to keep a firm hold on it. Within a very short time, Chittagong shot into prominence as the chief port of Bengal, and it maintained this reputation of its being

¹ J A S B, XIII (1844). 44

² Bhattasali, *op. cit.*, p. 137

as the chief port of Bengal till the seventeenth century, and the position which was hardly obtainable during the previous regimes. The rapid spread of Islam in Chittagong was another significant result of the conquests of Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah.

From numismatic evidence it appears that Fakhruddin's rule ended in 750 A H (1349 A D).¹ In the same year he was succeeded by his son Sultan Ikhtiyaruddin Ghazi Shah.² The evidence of his coins makes us know that he could exercise regal power only for a short time. His coins started to appear in 750 A H/1349 A D and his last coins, minted at Sonargaon, appeared in 753 A H /1352 A D.³ In the same year the coins of Sultan Ilyas Shah

¹ Abdul Karim, *Corpus of the Muslim Coins of Bengal*, p. 36

² *Ibid.*, p. 38. Dr A. Karim most aptly suggests that, Sultan Ikhtiyaruddin Ghazi Shah was the son and successor of Sultan Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah. The ground of his assumption is as follows : First, Sultan Ikhtiyaruddin Ghazi Shah began to issue his coins in 750 A H/1349 A D, in the same year when the coins of Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah ceased to appear. The new sultan minted his coins at Sonargaon, in the same place where his predecessor had minted his coins. Secondly, the new sultan introduces himself as al-sultan bin al-sultan, which logically leads to the inference that Sultan Ikhtiyaruddin should be the son of Sultan Fakhruddin. Lastly, the coins of Sultan Ikhtiyaruddin bear close affinity to that of Sultan Fakhruddin. Our supposition, however, is contradicted by the statement of Ibn Battuta who informs us that the only son of Fakhruddin was treacherously murdered by the governor of Sadkawan, while the sultan was still alive (Bhattasali *op. cit.*, p. 137). As regards the evidence of Ibn Battuta, it can be said that the murdered son of Sultan Fakhruddin was not the only son of Sultan Fakhruddin, who had some other issue staying with him.

³ *Corpus*, p. 38

began to appear from Sonargaon mint. It may reasonably be concluded that Sultan Ikhtiyaruddin was defeated and dethroned by Sultan Ilyas Shah, who thus gained the control over the territory of the rulers of Fakhruddin Mubarak Shahi dynasty. Besides the coins, the *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*¹ shed light on the fate of the rulers of Fakhruddin Mubarak Shahi dynasty. According to it, Sultan Ikhtiyaruddin and all other members of the family of Sultan Fakhruddin were put to death by Ilyas Shah. Thus came the end of the rule of the Fakhruddin Mubarak Shahi dynasty over Chittagong.

¹ E D, III, 304

Appendix. Identification of Chittagong with Sadkawan

There is a lot of controversy among scholars about the identification of Sadkawan (صدكوان) of Ibn Battuta : one group favouring its identification with Chittagong, and the other group with Satgaon.¹ The subject was first discussed by Col. Yule in his monumental work *Cathay and the way thither*.² The scholar selected the two cities of Satgaon and Chatgaon as most likely sites for identification with Sadkawan. Col. Yule in his 'Map of Asia in the first half of the fourteenth century', has inserted Sadkawan in the same position where modern town of Chittagong is located. He thus inclines to identify Sadkawan with Chatgaon. His view has been shared by Dr N K Bhattasali³ and other scholars. Col Yule's view has been challenged by Mr James Wise, Mr Benoy Ghosh and Mr N B Roy.⁴ In order to form a clear opinion, let us examine the accounts of the traveller.

According to our traveller, 'the first city in Bengal that we entered was Sadkawan a large town on the coast of the great sea.'⁵

The Portuguese sources state that Chittagong was the chief port and one of the most populous towns in Bengal in medieval period. "(It was) the main gateway to the royal capital Gaur...All the Port-

¹ Satgaon, commonly believed to be a corrupt form of Saptagram, in the pre-Muslim period, stood near modern Adisaptagram near which the Hooghli, the Saraswati and the Jamuna meet.

² Yule, *op. cit.*, I, 485f.

³ Bhattasali, *op. cit.*, p. 147f.

⁴ H B, II, 100n. Benoy Ghosh, *Pashchim Bangor Sangskriti*, part 2, p. 302

⁵ Ibn Battuta, p. 267

uguese commanders that come to Bengal, first, entered Chittagong. In fact, to go to Bengal meant to go to Chittagong."¹ Almost all the Chinese embassies, sent to the court of Gaud during the first half of the fifteenth century entered Bengal through Chittagong.² Muslim pilgrims of northern and eastern India used to sail from Chittagong on their way to the holy places in Arabia³ So Ibn Battuta's statement that Sadkawan was the first town through which he entered Bengal exactly correspond to the site of the Chittagong port.

The second part of the above quoted statement is obvious and subscribes to the direct evidence in favour of Chittagong. The port town of Chittagong is situated only a few miles inland from the sea coast, while Satgaon is about one hundred and fifty miles inland from the shores of the ocean. There is no proof that Satgaon was nearer to the sea six hundred years ago. The maps of Barros and other Portuguese writers and cartographers testify to this fact.

According to our traveller, "close by it, the river Ganga to which the Hindus go on pilgrimage, and the river Jun (Jaun) unite and discharge together into the sea."⁴

This portion of the account of our traveller gives rise to much confusion. Sir Henry Yule aptly remarks :

Jun is the name which our authors applies to the Jumna. But it is difficult to suppose that even Ibn Battuta's loose geography could conceive of the Jumna, whose banks he had frequented for eight years, as joining the Ganges near the sea...whatever confusion existed in our traveller's mind, I suppose that it was the junction of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra of which he had heard.⁵

¹ Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 21

² V B A (1945), I, 101 - 128

³ J B R S, XLII (1956), 13 - 15

⁴ Ibn Battuta, p. 267

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 459 Shihabuddin Talish, a 17th century historian to whom the topography of this region was well known, writes:

That Chittagong stands on the bank of the Ganges at its outfall is ascertained from the accounts of medieval and modern writers. De Barros, the Portuguese historian, locates Chittagong near the mouth of one of the branches of the Ganges (i.e., the Padma). He writes, 'the river of Chatigam... enters the eastern estuary of the Ganges at a city of that name'¹ De Barros' statement is corroborated by no mean authority than Abul Fazl, according to whom, "one of these (the two branches of the Ganges) flowing eastwards, falls into the sea at the port of Chittagong."² It is supposed that Chittagong was known to the Arabs as Shat-i-Jam³ which means the town, situated on the delta or lower reaches of the river Jam. Besides, the physical features of this region speak in favour of the statements of De Barros and Abul Fazl. The flow of this mighty river complex can be perceived along the coast of Chittagong as far south as Kutubdia Island.⁴ Thus it can be concluded that Chatgaon stands on the outfall of the Ganges and the confluence of the Ganges and the Jaun is nearer to Chittagong than Satgaon.

In reply to the opposite view that the Ganges and the Jamuna unite only at Satgaon, Dr. Bhattasali explains: "The 'Triveni' (the three braids meaning the three rivers) at Satgaon is 'Muktaveni' (separated braids) i.e., a place from which three rivers start on separate courses and not 'Yuktaveni' (united braids) like that at Allahabad. So, it is not a case of confluence at all but of separation."⁵

Those who think that the Hindus do not go on pilgrimage to the Brahmaputra, the Padma and other rivers of East Bengal, obviously

"In front of it (Samgramgarh, near Dacca) the Ganges and the Brahmaputra unites. The mingled stream after passing by Bhulua and Sondip, falls into the sea." (*Fathya*, p. 188)

¹ De Barros, IV, 452

² *Ann.*, II, 133

³ see *Supra*, p. 15

⁴ O 'Malley, *op. cit.*, p. 78

⁵ Bhattasali, *op. cit.*, p. 147

misrepresent the fact. Vajrayogini, Langalband (all these are situated near the confluences of the branch rivers of the Padma and the Brahmaputra) etc. are the places situated on these rivers, where religious minded Hindus in large number still go to these spots to bathe in the holy waters. King Bijoy Manikya of Tripura (? 1540- ? 1573 A D) commemorated the incident of his bath in the Lakhya (old course of the Brahmaputra) by engraving coins.¹ To the devout Hindus, the water of every river or sea is considered as sacred as that of the river Ganges. That is why we see so many holy spots sprang up on the banks of these rivers where the Hindus of neighbouring areas bathe and observe religious rites on specific days of the year.

Recently, some scholars expressed reluctance in calling the Padma by its other name the Ganges. If Bhagirathi is one of the names of the Ganges then why should Padma, the main current of the Ganges be barred from having the same name? Poet Alaol explicitly states that he was born on the bank of the Bhagirathi which we know is no other than the Padma, flowing by the side of Faridpur, the native district of the poet.² That the Padma has been the main current of the Ganges since the dawn of history cannot be doubted. A study of the accounts of foreign historians, cartographers, and travellers of medieval period will prove that it was the main flow of the Ganges during Ibn Battuta's sojourn in Bengal.

It is stated by our traveller that it took him one month in his journey by land to go to Kamaru (Kamrup) from Sadkawan and fifteen days in his return journey to Sonargaon.³ The cause of difference of timing between these two journeys is, as has been rightly pointed out by Dr A Karim that he haunted mountainous track in his upward journey and the river-route through the Brahmaputra in his downward voyage to Sonargaon.⁴

¹ Qt B P P, XXXVIII, 21

² Alaol, *Sikandar Nama*, ed. Ahmad Sharif, Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1977, p. 27

³ *Ibn Battuta*, p. 268

⁴ *Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference*, 1954

According to the traveller, Fakhruddin rebelled in Sadkawan and in Bengal. He placed Shayda, a faqir in the governorship of Sadkawan.¹ It appears that Sadkawan was the second capital of Fakhruddin, as the traveller expected to see the sultan in Sadkawan. No source at our disposal tells of the permanent hold of Sultan Fakhruddin over Satgaon. According to Barni, Fakhruddin once plundered Satgaon after defeating the governor of Lakhnauti.² If Satgaon was included in his dominion then the plundering of his own territory does not arise. From an inscription, we come to know that southern Bengal including Satgaon was in the hands of Ilyas Shah in 743 A H. On this Dr A Karim remarks : "We do not know of any vicissitude which might have befallen him before his death, by which he might have withdrawn from south Bengal. So, from 743 A H till his death, south Bengal was in the hands of Ilyas Shah. It could not go to any other's possession in 745-746 A H, which is the date of Ibn Battuta".³ The occupation of Satgaon by Fakhruddin resulted from his occasional raids. He could neither set up well-formed administration nor appoint his viceroy at Satgaon.

The traveller says that the port of Sadkawan furnished a naval base for Sultan Fakhruddin to conduct predatory incursions into the territory of Ali Shah.⁴ Satgaon could never be a convenient place for Fakhruddin as it is situated far away from his capital. There is no direct water-route between Sonargaon and Satgaon. It is awkward to say that he at first would go to Satgaon, and from there he would lead his marine forces and craft to Lakhnauti. On the other hand, Chittagong as a naval base was more strategically advantageous for him, where ships could be kept more safely than elsewhere in his kingdom, and from where he could make periodical raids on the territory of Lakhnauti. Historian Shihabuddin Talish states that

¹ *Ibn Battuta*, p, 268

² *E D*, III, 243

³ *Proceedings of Pakistan History Conference*, 1954, pp. 221-222

⁴ *Ibn Battuta*, p. 268

Sultan Fakhruddin beautified Chatgaon with both religious and secular buildings. He also built a highway from Chatgaon to Chandpur.¹ All these activities would not have been materialized if he failed to form a strong government at Chatgaon. As a strategist he realised that if Sonargaon would be attacked at any time, he would escape to Chatgaon which was geographically a convenient resort for his safety.

Scholars may point out that Sadkawan is written with a Sin (س) which agrees with the spelling of Satgaon. Chatgaon should be written as جاد قانون or جاتجام as ch (چ) and گ (g) are absent in Arabic alphabet.² It is probable that being unfamiliar with the name of the place, the traveller inquired of the local people the name of the place, where he landed. Chatgoan is pronounced by its inhabitants as Sadganw because a Chittagonian generally substitute 's' for 'ch' and 'd' for 't'. It appears that Ibn Battuta accepted the name in the form as pronounced by the native people.

The above discussion may be concluded with the remark that, Ibn Battuta's Sadkawan represents Chittagong and not Satgaon. This conclusion, thus arrived at by such scholars as Sir Henry Yule, M Lee and Sanguinetti,³ Dr H Blochmann⁴ Mr H A R Gibb, Dr N K Bhattasali, and Dr Abdul Karim, cannot be treated summarily. There might be slight inconsistency in the narratives of our traveller but this was quite natural for him as he wrote about the country situated thousands of miles away from his native land.

¹ *Fathya*, p. 182

² R D Banarji, *op. cit.*, II, 81

³ *Ibn Battuta*, trans. Lee and Sanguinetti, Tome quatrieme, p. 212

⁴ *J A S B*, XLII (1873), 233

CHAPTER VI

CHITTAGONG DURING THE ILYAS SHAHI DYNASTY

Section 1. Chittagong under Early Ilyas Shahi Sultans

Sultan Ikhtiyaruddin Ghazi Shah, son and successor of Sultan Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah was defeated and dethroned by Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah (1342-1357 A D), the first ruler of the line of kings named after him. No coin issued by Ikhtiyaruddin after 753 A H has so far been available, whereas the coins of Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah made their appearance in the mint of Sonargaon in the same year.¹ The extant coins, therefore, conclusively prove the end of the rule of the House of Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah over Sonargaon. As to what exactly happened to Chittagong, is not clearly known. The following facts, however, lead us to suggest that Chittagong was also occupied by Sultan Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah along with Sonargaon.

In the first place, after the overthrow of Ikhtiyaruddin Ghazi Shah, his brother-in-law (son-in-law of Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah) Zafar Khan, who was holding an important office under him, fled from Bengal and waited upon Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq of Delhi whom he requested to invade Bengal. Shams-i-Siraj Afif, who gives us this information says that Zafar Khan left Bengal by sea and reached Thatta in Sind.² Zafar Khan must have started his sea voyage from Chittagong port under the threat from Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah.

¹ *Corpus*, p. 42f.

² *E D*, III, 304

Secondly, the prevailing political situation in Arakan also suggests that Chittagong should have been under the control of Bengal's sultan. After the death of Meng-di, one of the most powerful rulers of Arakan, whose territorial jurisdiction is stated to have been extended over Chittagong, there "followed internal dissensions throughout a long and unhappy period".¹ This situation must have forced Arakan to keep herself away from Chittagong. These circumstances, undoubtedly, proved advantageous to Ilyas Shah to get hold of Chittagong.

Thirdly, we know definitely that Chittagong was under the control of his grandson Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah. The available sources do not point to suggest that Chittagong was conquered either by Sikandar Shah or by Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah. So it may be taken for granted that, Chittagong was conquered by Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah along with Sonargaon in 1353 A D.

The contemporary Delhi historian Shams i Siraj Afif calls Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah, 'Shah i Bangala' 'Shah i Bangalian', Sultan i Bangala, 'Sultan i Bangaliyan'.² Ilyas Shah was the first ruler to receive such titles and Dr A H Dani, therefore, comes to the conclusion that Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah was the first ruler to unite the whole of Bengal under him.³ It is only after accomplishing this task that "he vigorously pushed on his frontier towards the south and the west....and been altogether a serious menace to the empire of Delhi on its eastern frontier."⁴ It appears irrelevant that without subduing Chittagong over which he had legitimate claim as a successor to the House of Fakhruddin he proceeded to conquer the neighbouring kingdoms.

Nothing worth mentioning is known about the condition of Chittagong under Sultan Ilyas Shah and his son Sultan Sikandar

¹ J A S B, XIII (1844), 44

² Afif, *Tarikh i Firuz Shahi*, Bibliotheca Indica, 1890, pp. 114 - 118

³ *Bengali Literary Review*, April, 1957

⁴ Bhattasali, *op. cit.*, p 25

Shah (1357 - 1390 A D). The later part of the reign of Sultan Sikandar Shah was darkened by the revolt of his son Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah who had been appointed by his father as viceroy of eastern Bengal, the capital of which was at Sonargaon. Ghiyasuddin's coins were minted at Sonargaon, Fathabad, Chatgaon or Muazzamabad while his father was still alive.¹

The mint name engraved on the coins of Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah (1390 - 1410 A D) serve to indicate that Chittagong was under his effective rule. Out of the four coins of the I M C, only on one of them can the mint name be recognized and what was read as Jannatabad by earlier numismatists, appeared to Dr Bhattasali to read like Chatganw (چٹگانو).² Dr Bhattasali's reading thus points out Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah's control over Chittagong. Dr Bhattasali, however, is not fully sure of the correctness of his reading. "The point" he writes, "cannot be settled without clear coins."³

The contemporary epistolary sources give direct evidence of Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah's hold over Chittagong. Some letters⁴ written by Mawlana Muzaffar Shams Balkhi, the famous fourteenth century saint of Bihar, to Sultan Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah have been published by Syed Hasan Askari. In letter no. 152, the saint writes : "Now the (pilgrims) season is approaching. A farman may kindly be issued to the officials Karkuns) of Chatgaon directing them to accommodate in the first ship the band of Darwish pilgrims for Mecca who have assembled around me." In letter no. 165, the saint writes ; "I have already spent two years at your auspicious threshold, but now I seek your permission to leave it so that through the kindness of the king I may proceed towards Chatgaon". The contents

¹ Bhattasali, *op. cit.*, p. 63

² *Ibid.*, p. 78

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *J B R S*, XLII (1956), 13-15

of these letters undoubtedly prove that Sultan Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah had effective control over the port town of Chittagong.

The account of the Chinese travellers¹ testifies to the fact that Sultan Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah exercised full royal authority over Chittagong. The diplomatic relation established by Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah between the kingdom of Bengal and the empire of China was followed by regular exchange of embassies between the two countries. Almost all the Chinese diplomatic missions sent by the Chinese government to the court of Bengal entered the kingdom through the port town of Chittagong. Chittagong thus happened to be included in the kingdom of Bengal during their visit.

Section 2. Chittagong during the Interregnum : The House of Raja Ganesh

Sultan Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah's rule was followed by the reign of four successive sultans, namely Saifuddin Hamza Shah (813-814 AH/1410-11 to 1411-12 A D), Shihabuddin Bayezid Shah (814-817 A H/1411-12 to 1414-15 A D), Alauddin Firuz Shah (817 A H/1414 A D) and Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah (818 A H/ 1415-16 A D). Then there followed the reigns of two successive Hindu kings, Danujamarddana Deva (1339-1340 Saka/1417-18 A D) and Mahendra Deva (1340-41 Saka / 1418 - 1419 A D). The reappearance of the coins of Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah in 1418 A D proves his restoration to the throne.

The reconstruction of history during this period is undoubtedly a difficult task. A close study of the contemporary and later sources leads us to form an opinion that an influential Hindu noble named Raja Ganesh manipulated the course of events during this period. Modern historians reconstruct the story of Raja Ganesh which may be gathered up into the following brief review.

¹ V B A (1945), 101-128

The first three sultans of the Ilyas Shahi dynasty were followed by "three cyphers in succession.....who remained mere tools in the hands of their ministers...the selfish ambition of the nobles had full play"¹ The leader of this group of nobles was Raja Ganesh, an influential zamindar of north Bengal. At the very last, Ganesh assumed the crown himself. "This act of usurpation outraged Muslim sentiment, and an invitation was sent to Ibrahim Shah Sharqi, the sultan of Jaunpur to invade Bengal and deliver this land of Islam from the Kafir on the throne."² Ibrahim Shah Sharqi came with a large contingent to chastise Raja Ganesh. It is not known whether any actual engagement took place or not. "A truce was patched up by mutual consent, and the Jaunpur force went back, probably for a money consideration and certainly on the promise that Ganesh would convert his son Jadu to Islam and make him sultan of Bengal in his own place."³ But soon after the danger was averted, Raja Ganesh placed his son on the throne and "ruled in his own account under the proud title of Danujamardana Deva." The lamentable letters of Saint Nur Qutub Alam⁴ point out this fact. As regards Mahendra Deva, Sir Jadunath Sarkar writes : "Mahendra was evidently set up on the throne by the Hindu ministers just after the death of Ganesh."⁵ But "the attempt of the kingmakers was shortlived and ended in their speedy defeat as no coin was struck in Mahendra's name after that one year 1418 A.D."⁶ The regular issue of coins from 1418 A.D. to 1435 A.D. by Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah, the converted son of Raja Ganesh

¹ H B. II, 126

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 127

⁴ B P P (1948), pp. 38-39

⁵ H B II, 128

⁶ *Ibid.*

definitely proves his restoration to the throne and his uninterrupted rule over the kingdom. Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah was succeeded by his son Shamsuddin Ahmad. His assassination in 1437 A D brought the rule of the House of Raja Ganesh to an end,

The most authoritative evidence of the effective rule over Chittagong by the House of Raja Ganesh is the coins minted at Chittagong. It may be noticed that no coin was minted at Chittagong from the death of Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah (? 1410 AD) to the accession of Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah (1415 A D). Therefore, it can be supposed that the three weak successors of Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah had no control over Chittagong, the possession of which perhaps was seized by the party of Raja Ganesh. It has rightly been observed that the military strength of the Bengal sultanate greatly degenerated during the later part of the reign of Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah, resulting in the final overthrow of the Ilyas Shahi dynasty. Raja Ganesh with his Coch army might have utilized this situation in his favour. The coins of Danujamardana Deva,¹ dated in 1339 Saka (1417 A D) and 1340 Saka (1418 A D) and minted in Chittagong, testify to the control of Raja Ganesh over Chittagong. The author of the *Riyaz-us-salat* gives this king a reign of seven years and this is substantially correct when we bear the fact in mind that Ganesh was virtually the ruler of Bengal from 813 A H (1410 A D), the year of the accession of Saifuddin Hamzah Shah until 821 A H (1418 A D) in which year the last mostly great number of his coins were minted. It is noticeable that the coins of Danujamardana Deva were minted simultaneously from Chittagong and Pandua. This leads to suggest that this violent change in government took place in Pandua and Chittagong at the same time. The plan of usurpation might have been put into execution both in the capital and in the chief port (Chittagong) of the kingdom. The coins of Mahendra Deva, dated in 1340 Saka (1418 A D) and 1341 Saka (1419 A D) minted in Chatigrama, testify to his hold on Chittagong

¹ Karim, *Catalogue of coins*, p. 50

in succession to Danujamarddana Deva (Raja Ganesh). His reign was succeeded by that of Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah. The latter's Chittagong coins¹ may be grouped under two periods. His earlier coins (1415-1416 A D) and his later coins (1418-1431 A D), both kinds of coins were minted at Chittagong. This proves the continued holding of possession of Chittagong by the House of Raja Ganesh,

Lama Taranath's *History of Buddhism* furnishes an account which seems to have some historical value regarding Chittagong. In this book, it is written that "about a hundred years after the time of Pratita Sena, Cagala Raja,² probably the most powerful king of Catigao, rose to eminence in Bengal. His power was felt all over the country extending from Bengal to Delhi. He was devoted to Brahmanism."³ Vassilief in his own French translation of Taranath's works, has found out the date of Cagala Raja as follows: "From his (Cagala Raja) death to the year 1608, in which Taranath's work was composed, 160 years passed; consequently the history is continued to the year 1448 of our era."⁴

The establishment of identity of Cagala Raja is surely a perplexing job. Unfortunately, no historian has ever cared to make any critical study on his career except a short but significant remarks by Dr Kalika Ranjan Qanungo.⁵ The present writer following the scholar's view, intends to associate this king with Raja Ganesh. From Taranath's quotation it appears that Cagala Raja rose to prominence

¹ As many as fifty four coins of jalaluddin minted at Chatgaon in 823 A H (1420) have been found out so far, The coins belonged to three distinct kinds and the mint name is pronounced as (چٹگانو) (Chatganw)

² There might be relation between Cagala Raja of Taranath's account and Sangaldip and Shangal, the legendary king of Bengal in the *Riyaz* (p.25) and Firishta's accounts respectively.

³ J A S B, LXVII (1898), 26

⁴ I A, 1875, p. 367

⁵ The *Karnaphull*, (Magh, 1356 B S) Calcutta, p. 31

from a humble position because the historian did say nothing of his royal descent. This observation is equally applicable to Raja Ganesh who was but an influential noble before his becoming the king of Pandua. Secondly, like Cagala Raja the might of Raja Ganesh's arms might have been felt farther west to his original kingdom if not as far as Delhi in the case of Cagala Raja. Thirdly, both Raja Ganesh and Cagala Raja were upholders of Brahmanical doctrine, and it seems that they were responsible for its revival after a period of Muslim rule. Fourthly, it is known from Taranath's passage that Cagala Raja was a king of Catigao (Chittagong). The numismatic evidence clearly indicates that Raja Ganesh was the king of both Chittagong and Pandua at the same time. The lordship of Cagala Raja over Pandua though not explicitly stated in the account, is hinted at by the historian when he says that the might of the king was felt upto Delhi. Lastly, Cagala Raja was alive till 1448 A D, which does not vary much from that of Raja Ganesh. Apart from this minor chronological difference, the career of Cagala Raja roughly agrees with that of Raja Ganesh.

The accounts of De Barros, if these are taken literally, give a tacit reference to the possible domination of the House of Raja Ganesh over Chittagong. The historian writes that one hundred years before the Portuguese first visited to Chatgaon, the Mandarijs were the governors of the place. They exercised a certain amount of influence on the royal court at Gaud.¹ According to the Portuguese historians, the first Portuguese visit to Chittagong took place in 1517 - 18 A. D.² From the numismatic evidence it is known that in 1417 - 18 A D, just a hundred years back Chittagong was under the rule of the House of Raja Ganesh. The word Mandarij as defined in the *Hobson-Jobson*, 'is really a slight corruption of Hindu (from Sanskrit) mantri, 'a counsellor, a Minister of State,' for which it was indeed the proper old pre-Mohammadan term in India,... It is, no

¹ De Barros, p. 460

² See *infra*, ch x.

doubt, probable that the instinctive "striving after meaning" may have shaped the corruption of mantri into a semblance of mandar.¹ In another place of the same source, it is stated that "mantree is the word which the Portuguese made into mandarin."² The mandarijs were, in all probability, none but the higher Hindu officials, appointed in Chittagong by the rulers of the House of Raja Ganesh which had thus a definite hold over the district.

The report of a Chinese ambassador named Hou-hien, testifies to the firm hold of the rulers of the House of Raja Ganesh over Chittagong. In 1415 A D, the ambassador who arrived at Chittagong on his way to Gaud writes : "When the king heard that our ships had arrived there, he sent high officers to offer robes and other presents and over a thousand men and horses also came to the port."³ The numismatic sources point out that the reigning king of Bengal at that time (1415 A D) was Jalaluddin Muhammad, the converted son of Raja Ganesh, who must have sent a deputation to receive the Chinese emissary at the port of Chittagong.

The *Radzawang* or the *Arakanese Chronicle* supplies an interesting piece of narrative which has relation with the contemporary political events. In 1406 A D, an Arakanese king named Meng Tsau mwun or Naramaikhla, "forcibly gained possession of a lady named Tsau-b-nyo, the sister of the chief called Anan-thiu. The brother, determined on revenge, went to the court of Ava, and applied for assistance to dethrone the Arakanese king."⁴ The Burmese monarch, thereupon, sent an expedition against Meng Tsau mwun who fled into the Kula country.⁵ The governor of Chittagong "took from him his queen, Tsau-mwe-sheng, on which the fugitive king went to Thuratan, where

¹ H J, p. 550

² *Ibid.*, p. 598

³ V B A, I (1945), 121

⁴ J A S B, XIII (1844), 44

⁵ J A S B, XXXVIII (1869), 44

the king received him with distinction."¹ For several years the Telaings (who were fighting for the Arakanese) and the Burmese (the invaders) fought each other for the possession of Arakan and the Burmese were finally expelled in the year 788 (1426 A D) "by the united efforts of the Arakanese and the Telaings." The *Rodzawang*, then narrates the following events, which have been summarized by Sir A P Phayre as follows :

During this period the dethroned king was residing at the court of the king of Thuratan who being engaged in wars could not afford him any assistance ; while there the Delhi king came to attack Thuratan with a large army, consisting of elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers, also 'dogs as large as bullocks' trained in warfare. By the advice of Meng Tsau mwun, the dogs were disabled by means of iron hooks baited with raw flesh, seizing which, they were caught by the mouth and easily overpowered. The elephants and horses fell into pits, dug for them and covered over with straw and earth at the bottom of which were iron spikes , thus the Thuratan king obtained a complete victory. The Arakanese exiled king taught the king's subjects the art of entrapping a herd of wild elephants by driving them into a space enclosed by a stockade and ditch. He also instructed them in the art of training elephants.

Out of the gratitude for these services the king determined to assist the exiled prince in the recovery of his kingdom. He appointed a general called in the Arakanese annals U-lu-Kheng (identified as Wali Khan) to command the army of restoration. This person, however, betrayed his trust, and joining with a Rakhaing chief, named Tse-u-ka, they established a government and imprisoned Meng Tsau mwun. He escaped and fled to Bengal,

The king of Thuratan now appointed two nobles named Dambatsu and Babatsu to carry out his intentions, together with a large army under the command of Tshet ya khat. They arrived with orders to

¹ Ibid,

place Meng Tsau mwun on the throne, and bring back the head and skin of U lu Kheng. *The expedition was successful. U lu Kheng suffered the fate his crime deserved, and the historian records in glowing terms the joy of the people....*

The restored king, however was forced to submit to the degradation of being tributary to the king of Thuratan and from this time the coins of the Arakan kings bore on the reverse, their names and titles in the Persian character.

Meng Tsau mwun having got rid of allies, meditated a change of capital....(He) miraculously guided to the site of the present city of Arakan called Myouk u.... the city was founded.... in the year 792 1430 A D).

When Meng Tsau mwun found his end approaching, as his sons were infants he appointed his brother Men Kha ri heir to the throne, and closed his chequered career in the fourth year of his restoration, aged fifty three years (1430 A D).¹

Some important propositions can be deduced from the above quotation. First, Meng Tsau mwun, the deposed king of Arakan took asylum with the governor of Chittagong in 1406 A D, Chittagong was then under the effective rule of Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah. The fugitive king stayed in Chittagong for some time and then started for Gaud.

Secondly, Meng Tsau mwun reached Gaud in 1407 A D and he stayed there for a long time. He was a spectator of all that happened during this troublous period. The trouble probably had its root at the rapid changes on the throne as a result of the conspiracy of the courtiers headed by Raja Ganesh. The throne was then occupied by Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah in 1418 A D, who ruled comfortably till 1432 A D.

Thirdly, during his stay at the capital, Ibrahim Shah Sharqi, king of Jaunpur (confused by the chronicler to be the king of Delhi) invaded Bengal on two occasions, in 1415 A D and probably in

¹ J A S B, XIII (1844), 44 - 46, Italics mine

1420 A D. By the first invasion Raja Ganesh was humbled, but the second invasion of Ibrahim Sharqi was repulsed by Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah mainly (if the narration of the chronicler is to be believed) owing to the wisdom rendered by the exiled Arakanese king.

Fourthly, the king of Bengal in return for the services rendered by the Arakanese king, dispatched an army commanded by his general U lu Kheng (? Wali Khan) to assist the fugitive king to regain the throne. The desired object was achieved, but U lu Kheng treacherously seized the government by removing Meng Tsau mwun from the throne. The latter managed to escape from being imprisoned and took shelter in the court of Gaud and prayed for sultan's intervention. On this, the king of Gaud sent an army to put out the rebellion and to inflict penalty on the traitors. The expedition was crowned with success and Meng Tsau mwun was reinstalled on the throne.

Who was the sovereign of Gaud that helped the Arakanese king to regain his throne in 1426 A D ? In his *History of Burma*, Phayre names the restorer king as Nazir Shah.¹ Dr A H Dani identifies Nasir Shah with Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah, the first of the restored Ilyas Shahi lineage.² But Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah had not become a king yet in 1426 A D. As the numismatic evidence suggests, Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah was holding the sceptre of the Bengal ruler at that time and, therefore, the credit of restoring the king of Arakan should go in his favour.

Fifthly, "the restored king, however, was forced to submit to the degradation of being tributary to the king of Thuratan. This means the subordination of Arakan to the sultan of Bengal. From this time began the practice of taking Muslim names by the Arakanese kings beside their own Pali and Arakanese names as a mark of their holding authority over a part of the kingdom of Bengal especially Chittagong.

¹ Phayre, *op. cit.*, p. 78; Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 390

² J A S B, CXXI (1952), 136

Lastly, a close reading of the passage reveals that the restored king, "got rid of his allies." This means that the Arakanese king cast off his allegiance to the ruler of Bengal. He founded a new capital probably finding the old one insecure. The king died in 1430 A D. The chronicler states that as the sons of the deceased king were infants, till then, the king nominated his brother Men Kha ri as his successor. But the unusual delay of four years in the investiture with kingship gives rise to the suspicion that the succession was not uncontested as the chronicler would have us believe. Let us think that either one of the deceased king's sons or the regent (? Men Kha ri) ruled the kingdom before it passed to Men Kha ri in 1434 A D.

The stated circumstances suggest that the House of Raja Ganesh had not only firm grip over Chittagong but its authority extended even upto Arakan. The usurpation of Bengal throne by Raja Ganesh was an instance of insurrection against the misrule of the successors of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah. Chittagong was undoubtedly one of the principal haunts of this rebellion. Here the period of Muslim domination was hardly more than seventy years. However, the attempts of the Hindus proved ephemeral and Jalaluddin, the converted son of Raja Ganesh turned the tide in favour of Islam.

Section 3. Chittagong during the Restored Ilyas Shahi Dynasty

The rule of the House of Raja Ganesh was terminated in 839 A H (1435 - 36 A D) by the assassination of Shamsuddin Ahmad, the son and successor of Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah. With the accession of Nasiruddin Mahmud, a distant relative to the last ruler of the earlier Ilyas Shahi sultans, the line of the Ilyas Shahi dynasty was restored. The facts about the Mahmud Shahi control over Chittagong is proved by numismatic and itinerary evidences. The coins minted at Chittagong and engraved in 842 A H¹ (1438 39 A D) prove his firm hold over Chittagong. From the Chinese sources it is known

¹ *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1893, p. 143

that Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah, in order to maintain diplomatic relation with the Chinese emperor, sent two missions to the Chinese court in 1438 and 1439 A.D.¹ The missions must have been sent through the port of Chittagong like the earlier ones.

The Gaudian control over Chittagong especially its southern part was threatened by the growing Arakanese expansion toward north. According to the *Arakanese Chronicle*, Men Kha-ri or Ali Khan (1434-1459 A.D.), successor of Meng Tsau mwun "did not long submit to the authority of the king of Bengal. He took possession of the country as far as Ramu".² The Muslim name of the king indicates his authority over a portion of Chittagong. The *Arakanese Chronicle* specifically states that he proceeded upto Ramu. The statement of Sir Jadunath Sarkar referring to Men Kha-ri's political sway, that he "wrested the whole of Chatgaon from Barbak Shah,"³ is too far fetched a conjecture to believe. Nevertheless, the Arakanese monarchs kept southern Chittagong under their control for most time of the restored Ilyas Shahi regime.

Men Kha-ri was succeeded by his son Ba tsa phyu or Kalimah Shah (1459-1482 A.D.), who proceeded farther north and "took possession of the town of Chittagaon."⁴ The available sources lead Sir A.P. Phayre to suggest that, he (Ba tsa phyu) "had extensive possessions in Bengal. Coins of that date (1460 A.D.) now exist with legends in the Bengalee and Persian character, as well as Burmese some being struck by the viceroys in Chittagong, others in the name of the king himself",⁵ The Muslim name and Kalimah engraved in the coins prove the fact of his control over Chittagong. We should not, however, lay much importance on

¹ Sukhamoy Mukhopadhyaya, *Banglar Itihaser Dusho Bachar*, p. 181

² Phayre, *op. cit.*, p. 78

³ Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, III 321

⁴ Phayre, *op. cit.*, p. 78

⁵ J. A. S. B., X (1841), 688. Phayre writes the name of the king as Ta tsan phyu.

Phayre's remark that, "for the next half century the kings of Arakan, though by reason of the weakness of the kings of Bengal they retained Chittagaon."¹ The happenings during this period do not justify Phayer's statement.

The epigraphic evidence definitely tells that northern Chittagong should be under the effective control of the Bengal sultan in 1474 A D and it remained under the Gaudian occupation till the reign of Sultan Shamsuddin Yusuf Shah (1476 - 1481 A D), the son and successor of Ruknuddin Barbak Shah. An old mosque inscription² in Hathazari u z reads that the building which contains the inscription, was constructed by Rasti Khan in 1474 A D, during the reign of Sultan Ruknuddin Barbak Shah.

Neither the *Arakanese Chronicle* nor any other source gives slightest reference to any hostile engagement between Sultan Barbak Shah and king Ba tsa phyu. Sultan Barbak Shah (1459 - 1474 A D) was one of the greatest conquerors among early independent sultans of Bengal. A powerful ruler and a many sided genius as he was the sultan would not give up the claim over the territories on which his predecessors had full control. On the other hand, in the *Arakanese history* Ba tsa phyu is ranked with the most powerful rulers of his country although he might not be equal to Barbak Shah in strength. In the present state of our knowledge, we can at best say that Ba tsa phyu could never extend his authority upto northern Chittagong which was then under effective control of the Gaud sultan.

The rule of Barbak Shah ended in 1476 A D and it was followed by that of his son and successor, Sultan Shamsuddin Yusuf Shah. According to the numismatic sources, he reigned from 879-886 A H (1474-1481 A D).³ His sway over northern Chittagong is proved by an inscription engraved on the surface of a wall of a

¹ Phayre, *op. cit.*, p. 79

² Shamsuddin Ahmed, *Inscriptions of Bengal*; IV, 91

³ *Corpus*, pp. 97-98. Actually his reign begins in 1476 A D

mosque built during his rule.¹ The mosque is situated only about two miles to the north of Rasti Khan's mosque.

What was the political condition of Chittagong during this time cannot be satisfactorily stated unless more concrete evidences come to light. Some opinions may, however, be formed in the light of the available sources. It can be conjectured that the district of Chittagong at that time was divided unequally between the Gaudian and the Arakanese rulers. The epigraphic evidence definitely proves the Gaudian control over northern Chittagong. On the other hand, the numismatic sources and the historical records furnish evidence of Ba tsa phyu's territorial possession in Chittagong as far north as the town.

The history of Chittagong between 1482 A D (the year of the death of Ba tsa phyu) and 1493 A D (the year of the accession of Sultan Husain Shah) is lost in obscurity. The picture of Gaud, Arakan, and Tripura presents a sorry spectacle of weak rule, and administrative inefficiency which it seems did not permit the rulers of these countries to claim an effective and undisputed authority over the whole of Chittagong. The rule of Shamsuddin Yusuf Shah was consecutively followed by that of Sikandar Shah and Jalaluddin Fath Shah (1481 - 1486 A D), the last ruler of the restored Ilyas Shahi dynasty. The Abyssinian slaves on which the later Ilyas Shahi sultans placed over confidence usurped the throne. At least four kings are known to have ruled for seven years (1487 -1493 A D). This is the darkest period in the history of Bengal marked by usurpations and assassinations and the resultant administrative breakdown. The *Rajamala* does not specifically refer to the Tripura occupation of Chittagong before Dhanyamanikya's conquest of Chittagong in 1513 A D. Next, the contemporary Arakanese history presents a wretched picture of successive misrule, plots and regicides. Ba tsa phyu or Kalimah Shah was succeeded by his son Dau lya in 1482 A D. After Dau lya's death in 1492 A D, Ba tsa ngyo (1492-1494 A D), the uncle of Dau lya and the son of Men Kha ri became King.

¹ J A S P, XII (1967), 323-325

After a short reign of two years he died and was succeeded by Ran Oung, son of Dau Iya who ruled for a few months in 1494 A.D. After him the throne was captured by Tsa lang ga the, uncle by the mother's side of Ran Oung in the same year. The absence of Muslim names of these kings indicates their loss of hold over Chittagong.

Nature abhors a vacuum. If the rulers of Gaud, Arakan and Tripura failed to exercise authority over the district then the question may naturally arise, by whom was Chittagong governed during the period? At this stage we have no alternative except to turn our attention to two Bengali works namely, the *Maqtul Husain* by Muhammad Khan and the *Paragali Mahabharata* by Kavindra Parameswar. The author of the *Maqtul Husain* states that Rasti Khan, one of his forefathers was the lord of the province of Chatigrama (Chatigrama deshpati).¹ In the Hathazari mosque inscription Rasti Khan is given the title of Majlis i Ala. Dr Abdul Karim² and Dr Ahmed Sharif³ are unanimous in their opinion that Rasti Khan of the Hathazari mosque inscription and Rasti Khan of Poet Muhammad Khan's genealogical table and the *Paragali Mahabharata* are one and the same person. In these sources Rasti Khan has been lauded as an illustrious ruler. The author of the *Maqtul Husain* further states: "Mina Khan (son of Rasti Khan) of matchless beauty was, as it were, the unique five arrows of the god of Love and looked like a bridegroom, charming to women. I (the poet) bow down many times to his son Gabhur Khan, possessor of many virtues and strong like Bhimsen who is calm and steady as well as an abode of fine sentiments."⁴ The author of the *Paragali Mahabharata* writes:

¹ S P, Monsoon number 1366 B S, pp. 101 - 103

² S P, Monsoon number, 1371 B S, pp. 153 - 174

³ S P, 3rd year no. 1

⁴ কামিনী মোহন বর অভিনব পঞ্চশর
মিনা খান রূপে অনুপাম।

...
তান পুত্র গুণবান উন্নত সম বলবান
যার কীর্তি গোড় দেশ জয়ি।

“Paragal Khan, son of Rasti Khan was an abode of many virtues, He was made by the Creator as a divine tree on earth that could fulfil all desires. Sultan Husain Shah, lord of five Gaudas entrusted him with the management of Tripura.”¹

The above narratives lead one to suppose that the Rasti Khani line did not come to an end in spite of the establishment of authority over Chittagong town by the Arakanese king Batsaphyu. The Arakanese northward expansion undoubtedly made the Muslim province of Chittagong much smaller. The administrative headquarters of the province had to be shifted from Chittagong town to somewhere near the place where the Rasti Khani and the Yusuf Shahi mosques are situated. It is significant to note that neither Rasti Khan nor his son Mina Khan nor his grandson Gabhur Khan has been stated in Muhammad Khani pedigree as a subordinate to the rulers either of Gaud or of Arakan. This means that Rasti Khan exercised his authority over Chittagong at least its northern part and discharged governmental functions independent of outside control. The political circumstances gave Rasti Khan a good chance to assert authority over his territory. Thus gave Masnad i Ala Rasti Khan, the Barbak Shahi governor became the lord of Chittagong (Chatigram deshpati). It seems that he outwardly exhibited loyalty to the Bengal sultan but in practice he ruled his territory as an independent ruler. His accomplishments, as stated in the two Bengali works, are illustrated by the erection of the two extant mosques. However, his greatest achievement was the maintenance of Muslim rule in northern Chittagong inspite of increasing Arakanese incursions and the stopping of material help from the centre. The *Maqtul Husain* states that Rasti Khan was the

গাভুর খান ঙগনিধি

খির খীর রমোদখি

তাহানে প্রণমি বহুতর।

¹ রাস্তি খান তন্ন পরাগল খান) বহুল ঙগনিধি।

পৃথিবীতে কর্তব্য নিরমিল বিধি।

সুলতান হোসন পক্ষয় গোড় নাথ।

ত্রিপুরের ভার সমপিল যার হাত।

father of Mina Khan. The *Paragali Mahabharata* clearly expresses that Paragal Khan was the son of Rasti Khan. Can the Mina Khan of the *Maqtul Husain* be identified with the Paragal Khan of the *Paragali Mahabharata* ? We are inclined to think that the two persons are identical. Paragal Khan, the worthy successor of Rasti Khan, ruled his paternal territory like an independent ruler, But his authority was shortlived, as Sultan Husain Shah brought the whole of Chittagong under his control within a very short time following his accession and made Rasti Khani descendants, the frontier guards in northern Chittagong close to Tripura border. The *Paragali Mahabharata* clearly states that Paragal Khan was entrusted with the task of management of Tripura affairs.

The year 1493 A D is of much importance in the history of Bengal for it witnesses the accession of a powerful ruler to the throne of Bengal which ended a dark period of a decade. The *Tripura Chronicle* gives evidence of the Husain Shahi control over Chittagong but it does not state the exact time of the conquest. It is permissible to say that he brought Chittagong under his control within a short time after his accession to the throne.

CHAPTER VII

CHITTAGONG DURING THE HUSAIN SHAHI DYNASTY

Section 1 Rivalry between Husain Shah and Dhanyamanikya

The dynasty which was founded by Sultan Husain Shah (1493 - 1519 A D) is known in the history of Bengal as the Husain Shahi dynasty. It is also known as Sayid dynasty because of Sultan Husain Shah's claim to be a Sayid. On his death¹ his son Nusrat Shah (1519 - 1532 A D) whose coins and inscriptions appeared even during his father's life time, ascended the throne. Both Alauddin Husain Shah and Nusrat Shah are still held in respect for their enlightened and benevolent rule. The assassination of Sultan Nusrat Shah brought his illustrious career to an end in 1532 A D. He was succeeded by his minor son Sultan Alauddin Firuz Shah (1532 - 1533 A D), who ruled only for three months. The unfortunate prince was probably murdered by his uncle who ascended the throne of Bengal as Sultan Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah (1533 - 1538 A D). He was cast out from power in 1538 A D by Sher Khan, who thus put an end to the half a century rule of the Husain Shahi dynasty.

The *Rajamala* or the *Chronicle of the Tripura kings*, one of the principal sources of the history of this period, gives evidence of a

¹ A coin of Sultan Husain Shah dated 931 A H/1524 - 25 A D has recently been discovered. This extends the period of his reign (upto 1524 A D). *Monthly bulletin of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta*, August, 1975

series of hostile engagements between Dhanyamanikya, king of Tripura and Husain Shah, sultan of Gaud with the objective of subjugating Chittagong. As-a-result, Chittagong became the theatre of war between these two ambitious monarchs. The *Rajamala* states that Dhanyamanikya (1490-1517 A D), the valiant Tripura king, conquered Chittagong in 1435 Saka or 1513 A D by fighting against his opponent. He drove out the Gaudian forces from Chittagong. The king consequently struck gold coins in Chittagong in that year to commemorate his victory.¹ According to the M S copy of the *Rajamala*, Dhanyamanikya personally led the campaign into Chittagong.² Evidently, the Gaud sultan, whose army suffered setbacks at the hands of the Tripura king, was no other than Sultan Alauddin Husain Shah, who had thus, on the same authority, a definite hold on the district before 1513 A D.

The question may arise when Sultan Husain Shah brought Chittagong under his subjugation. The contemporary sources do not shed light on the date of the conquest. The narrative of an incident relating to the noble Arab in De Barros' book³ suggests a line of inquiry about the early career of Husain Shah. Dr A B M Habibullah thinks that this description of De Barros refers to Sultan

¹ তাহপর গ্রী ধনমানিক্য নুপবর ।
চাটগ্রাম জিলেক করিয়া সার ॥
চৌদ্দশ পাঁচত্রিশ শ ক সমর জিলিল ।
চাটগ্রাম জয় করি মোহর মারিল ॥
চৌড়ের যতক সৈন্য চলেতে ছিল ।
গ্রী ধন মানিক্য তাকে দূর করি দিল ॥

—*Rajamala*, II 22. One of the Chittagong coins of Dhanyamanikya is preserved in the Chittagong University Museum, see Karim, *Catalogue of coins*, pp. 23, 94

² গ্রী ধন মানিক্য রাজা চাটগ্রাম চলে ।
চৌদ্দশ পাঁচত্রিশ শকে নিজ বাহু বলে ॥

—at S, Mukhopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, p. 316

³ De Barros, pp. 459 - 461

Husain Shah.¹ His view may be considered favourably since the career of Husain, as is known from tradition and other sources, roughly correspond to the account of De Barros. There is, however, a difficulty to establish an identity of these two persons. According to De Barros, the murder of the Bengal sultan by the noble Arab and the latter's becoming the sultan of Bengal had taken place one hundred years before the Portuguese first landed in Chittagong. From the available Portuguese sources it is known that the first Portuguese landing in Chittagong took place in 1517 A.D.² It is quite improbable that Husain Shah ascended the throne of Bengal in the first quarter of the fifteenth century. It is not unlikely that Barros here committed an error in computing time, which was quite natural for a writer who writes the history of the country that lies thousands of miles away from his own. The historian must have heard the tradition about the noble Arab from his countrymen who actually visited this part of the country and who collected the tradition when it had already been thrown to disorder. If the time factor is not taken seriously, then it may be assumed that Chittagong constituted a basis for an ambitious project of Husain. If the mandarij, governor of Chittagong be identified with Masnad-i-Ala Rasti Khan then it may be supposed that Husain got himself admitted to the royal court of Gaud through the governor. Afterwards, when Husain became the sultan of Gaud he appointed Paragal Khan, son of Rasti Khan, an officer in northern Chittagong. The narratives of De Barros help us to find out a solution of the problem of the origin of Husain Shah, hitherto wrapped in a shroud of mystery.

To resume the narrative, Husain Shah became very angry at the news of the reverses of his army at the hands of the king of Tripura. He sent a large re-inforcement consisting of 'Twelve Bangalas' and certain other divisions under the command of Gaur Mallik.³ The sultan succeeded in reoccupying Chittagong. But his occupation of

¹ H B, II, 142n

² See *Infra* ch X.

³ *Rajamala*, II, 22

Chittagong proved to be of short duration. According to the *Rajamala*, the Tripuras re-invaded Chittagong and drove Gaur Mallik and his army out from Chittagong. On the authority of the printed copy of the *Rajamala*, Dhanyamanikya personally proceeded to occupy Chittagong.¹ But according to the MS copy of the *Rajamala* the king occupied Chittagong by dispatching a set of troops.² The king appointed Rosang Mardān Narayan governor of the conquered territory.³

According to the *Rajamala*, Dhanyamanikya extended his conquest farther south and took possession of six 'shiqs' that of Rambu (Ramu) included, by military force. He even proceeded to Arakan. To commemorate his conquest he excavated a tank somewhere near Arakan.⁴ According to the printed version of the *Rajamala*, the king penetrated deep into Arakan and conquered it. He built a fort⁵ in that place and posted troops to strengthen his position. The king then returned to his capital entrusting Rosang Mardān Narayan, the Tripura governor of Chittagong, to carry the plan of complete subjugation of

¹ গোড়াই মল্লিক ভঙ্গ দিল যুদ্ধ হৈতে ।

শ্রী ধন্যমানিক্য চলে চাটিগ্রাম লৈতে ॥

—*Ibid.*, p. 24

² পুনরপি ধন্যমানিক্য মহারাজা ।

চাটিগ্রাম লইবারে পাঠাইল প্রজা ॥

—*Rajamala*, qt S Mukhopadhyaya op cit., p. 318

³ চাটিগ্রাম হস্তে ভঙ্গ দিল গোড় মেনা ।

রসাজ মর্দন নারায়নে বসাইল থানা ॥

—*Rajamala*, II, 24

⁴ রামু আদি ছয় সীক মারিয়া লইল ।

রসাজ নিকটে জাইয়া পুষ্করিনী খনিল ॥

—*Rajamala*, qt S Mukhopadhyaya, op. cit., p. 318

⁵ রামু ছত্রাসিক রাজা আমল করিল ।

রসাজ জিনিয়া কিল্লা পুষ্করী খনিল ॥

—*Rajamala*, II, 24. The name ছত্রাসিক read by K P Sen, editor of the printed copy of the *Rajamala* is wrong since we do

Arakan into effect. Rosang Mardan (lit. the conqueror of Rosang viz., Arakan) was a title awarded to him in recognition of his services rendered in the Arakan expedition.¹ The title narayan, according to the *Ain-i-Akbari*, belonged to a class of Tripura nobles.² The Tripuras soon after suffered setback at the hands of the enemy. The Tripura king must have lost the conquered territories though the *Rajamala* does not distinctly relate his loss of Chittagong. Had he not lost Chittagong then there was no reason of his violent anger caused by the failure of Rosang Mardan,³ his general. The infuriated king dispatched a body of troops under joint command of Rai Kachag and Rai Kacham.⁴ They marched forth to Chittagong in 1436 Saka (1514 AD and reoccupied it in the next year (1437 Saka) which issue roused hot displeasure of Sultan Husain Shah.⁵ The latter sent a more powerful expedition under Haitan (? Hatian) Khan and Karabe Khan. This expedition, according to the *Rajamala*, consisted of one hundred elephant, five thousand horse and one lakh of foot.⁶ The *Rajamala* reports that the objective of the

not come across such a place-name in any period of history of the district. We are inclined to think that the wording ছাশিক (six shiqs) as is found in the MS copy is correct. 'Shiq' as a subdivisional unit for administrative purposes was current in Bengal under the rule of the Independent Sultanate.

¹ রসাজ মারিতে গীয়াছিল সেনাপতি।

সেই হতে রসাজ মর্দন নাম খ্যাতি ॥

—*Rajamala*, qt S Mukhopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, p. 318

² *Ain*, II, 130

³ নিজ রসাজ 'ল'তে নাৰে সেনাপতি। *Rajamala*, II, 24

⁴ রায় কছাগ রয় কছম দুই সেনাপতি।

ক্ষোষ হৈয়া বৃশ্চিয়ে পাঠায় শীঘ্রগতি ॥ —*Ibid.*

⁵ শূনিয়া হোসন শাহ বড় ক্ষোষ হৈল।

... ..

ত্রিপুর না জিনি মোর মন দুঃখ হইল।

—*Rajamala*, qt S Mukhopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, p. 318

⁶ *Ibid.*

expedition was the conquest of Tripura but it is hardly believable that Husain Shah had any design on Tripura while Chittagong was not till then permanently conquered. Chittagong was more valuable to him than the rugged and unprofitable hill kingdom of Tripura. The Bengal army was intercepted by the Tripuras near Comilla. The Tripuras devised a stratagem and routed the Bengal army. The Tripura king thus reestablished his authority over Chittagong and issued gold coins from the sacred place of Falamatiswara as a mark of his subjugation of Chittagong,¹

The repeated failures of the Bengal army in reconquering Chittagong greatly agitated the sultan if not dispirited him. It was unlikely that a powerful and ambitious monarch like Husain Shah would allow the Tripura ruler to hold an unopposed occupation of Chittagong. The contemporary Portuguese sources give evidence of the Bengal sultan's almost continued exercising of authority over Chittagong from the time of their arrival at Chittagong in 1517 A D to the downfall of the dynasty in 1538 A D. The *Tripura* and the *Arakanese Chronicles* supply indirect evidences of this fact. But all these sources do not shed light on the event of the final conquest of Chittagong by Sultan Husain Shah. Both the *Rajamala* and the *Radzawang* do not record the conquest of Chittagong by Sultan Husain Shah, an event quite undignified to the people of those countries. Let us examine one by one the available sources that supply indirect evidences of the Husain Shahi occupation of the district.

On the authority of the contemporary Portuguese historians we have definite evidence of Husain Shah's occupation of Chittagong. During Joao Coelho and Joao Silveira's (1517 - 18 A D) visit to Chittagong, the governor of that place was a Muslim. Joao Coelho came to Chittagong by a Moorish vessel and stayed for some time

¹ ফলশ্রুতির তীর্থে জরব মান্নির।।

চাটিগ্রাম আমল করে মোহর নিশাইয়া।। — *Rajamala*, II, 31, According to the editor of the *Rajamala*, Falamatiswar was another name of Sitakunda (*Ibid.*, p. 298)

at the court of the governor.¹ This shows that Chittagong was then held by the Bengal sultan who also set up a regular government in the conquered province. However, the later Portuguese historian Faria e Souza's remark that "the port of Chittagaon appears to have been held by the king of Arakan" when Silveira entered the port² (1517 - 18 A D) has no foundation. The contemporary Portuguese historian De Barros explicitly writes that "the king of Arakan was at this time (1517 - 18) subject to the king of Bengal"³ On another occasion, De Barros writes that "there was no good feeling between Arakan and Bengal."⁴ On the same authority it is learnt that the fishermen of Chittagong coast at this time (1528 A D) used to go as far as the southern Arakanese coast for a better catch.⁵ De Barros's statement, which is more reliable than that of Faria e Souza thus dismisses the possibility of the Arakanese lordship over Chittagong at that time.

The map of De Barros shows a large tract of land comprising Chittagong, Hill Chittagong and northern Arakan as part of the kingdom of Bengal. Now the problem is to which ruler of the Husain Shahi dynasty goes the credit of the conquest of such a big tract of land? It is unlikely that Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah (1533-38 A D), the last of the Husain Shahi rulers who had definite hold on Chittagong conquered it because in the early years of his reign he was preoccupied with subduing the trouble of his unnatural succession. In the later years of his reign, he had to be on his guard against the

¹ See *infra*, ch x

² Faria e Souza, *History of the Portuguese conquests in Asia*, trans. Captain John Stephens, I, 220. A P Phayre (*op. cit.*, p. 172) and L S S O' Malley (*op. cit.*, p. 22) following Faria's account commit similar mistake.

³ Ot Campos, *op. cit.*, pp. 28, 30

⁴ See *infra*, ch x

⁵ Campos, *op. cit.* p. 31

rising power of Sher. Moreover, the contemporary sources do not throw light on the conquest of new territories by him. Sultan Nusrat Shah (1525-1532 A.D.), in the later part of his reign, had to keep watch on the expanding Mughal empire under Babur on the western frontier. Therefore, the subjugation of a large part of Arakan - Chittagong region might have undertaken either by Sultan Husain Shah or by Nusrat Shah in the early part of his reign. But a close examination of the contemporary sources speaks in favour of Sultan Husain Shah.

The *Arakanese Chronicle* supplies indirect evidence of the Husain Shahi occupation of Chittagong. All the Arakanese rulers from Ran Oung to Tha tsa ta¹ failed to hold authority over Chittagong, for which they did not feel necessity of taking Muslim names. The deplorable condition of Arakan might have helped any project of conquest of the territory. Probably, Arakan submitted to the authority of the Bengal sultan and allowed some parts of the kingdom to be annexed to the kingdom of Bengal. The map of De Barros shows a large territory comprising southern Chittagong and a portion of Arakan under the jurisdiction of Codavascao (? Khuda Bakhsh Khan), the Husain Shahi governor of southern Chittagong. This was not possible unless Arakan had been brought into obedience.

Maulvi Hamidullah Khan, the local poet and historian in his book *Tarikh-i-Chatgam* has presented the local tradition of the Muslim conquest of Chittagong as follows :

From ruins and legends it would appear that this Nusrat Shah Padishah, who was a king or a prince of Bengal, went after the destruction of Gaur, with a large number of Muslim and Hindu emigrants, to Eastern Bengal, and attacked the Mugs, took their town and made it a domicile for his men. The reason of his emigration to these parts was this.²

He further states that "one Alfa Husaini of Baghdad assisted Nusrat

¹ See *supra*, ch vi, sec. 3

² *Tarikh*, pp. 17-18, trans. Blochmann, *J A S B*, XL I (1872), 336-337

with ships and materials and thus raised the standard of victory (Nusrat) in that country (Chittagong). Husaini for this reason, became the king's son-in-law and lived, honoured and distinguished".¹ The *Tarikh* further reads that the sultan commemorates the conquest of Chittagong by renaming it Fathabad i.e, place of victory.² It may be pointed out that Nusrat Shah was neither the first Muslim conqueror of Chittagong nor he led his victorious campaign after the alleged destruction of Gaud. But the possibility of his taking part in the capture of Chittagong from the hands of the Arakanese cannot be ruled out. It seems that the historian could lay hold upon the tradition when it was already in a confusion,

The two contemporary Bengali works, namely, the *Paragali Mahabharata* and the *Chhuti Khani Mahabharata* give evidence of a state of war between Sultan Husain Shah and the Tripuras being carried on obviously for the occupation of Chittagong. Kavindra Parameswar writes in his *Paragali Mahabharata* that Laskar Paragal Khan, the illustrious son of Rasti Khan was entrusted by Sultan Husain Shah, "lord of five Gaudas" with the duty to keep the Tripuras to submission.³ Srikar Nandi in his *Chhuti Khani Mahabharata* states that Chhuti Khan, general of Sultan Husain Shah, fell upon the Tripuras and kept them in tight grip. The panic-stricken Tripura king took shelter in the cave for the safety of his life. The poet further narrates that inspite of the cessation of hostilities and consequently the respite granted to the Tripura king by the august Khan, the Tripura king was spending his days

1 *Ibid.*

2 *Ibid.*

3 রাস্তি খান তনয় বহুল গুণনিধি।
পৃথিবীতে বলপত্তন, নিরমিল বিধি॥
সুলতান হোসন পঞ্চম গোড় নাথি।
দ্বিপদরের ডায় সম্মিল যার হাথি॥

in constant terror apprehending an attack in any time from the side of the Khan. The Khan was whiling away his days hereafter in ever increasing happiness and joy. Having been shown allegiance to the sovereign, the Khan was thus allowed to enjoy uninterruptedly the fruit of the conquest.¹ This is obviously a classic instance of the exaltation of a patron by a dependant poet, but it helps us in establishing the fact that Sultan Husain Shah not only fully conquered Chittagong but established his authority firmly over the occupied territory.

Still more information of the Husain Shahi conquest of Chittagong is supplied by poet Daulat Wazir Bahram Khan. In his work *Laili Majnu*, the poet states that the sultan of Gaud appointed Hamid Khan 'adhikari' of Chittagong.² The poet specifically mentions the sultan of Gaud by name Husain Shah.³

¹ তর্কিন (হোসেন শাহ) এ সেনাপতি লক্ষকর ছদ্মটি খান।

হিপদ্রার উপরে করিল সন্নিধান॥

হিপদ্রার নৃপতি বার ডরে এড়ে দেশ।

পবিত্র গহবরে গিয়া করিল প্রবেশ॥

... ..

যদ্যপি অভয় দিল খান মহামতি।

তথাপি আতঙ্কে বৈসে হিপদ্র নৃপতি॥

আপন নৃপতি সন্তপিতা সবিশেষে।

সদখে বসে লক্ষকর আপনার দেশে॥

... ..

দিনে দিনে বাড়ি তার রাজসংমান। —Qt, *Ibid.*, p 268

² আদেশিল গোড়শ্বরে উজির হামিদ খাঁরে

অধিকারী হৈল (হৈতে) চাটগ্রাম। —Qt, *Bangla Prachin Puthir Vibaran*, pt I & II, pp. 14-16

³ সব লোক নরপতি ভুবন বিখ্যাত অতি
আছিল হোসেন সাহা বর। —*Ibid.*

The above discussion suggests that Sultan Husain Shah brought Chittagong under his occupation definitely before 1513 A D and probably within a short time of his accession to the throne. Husain, a born Arab, left along with his father and other members of the family, his original home to settle in Bengal. He arrived at Chittagong, made himself well-acquainted with the local governor Masnad-i-Ala Rasti Khan and through him entered the royal court at Gaud, where he eventually became an influential noble. Soon after his becoming the sultan, he succeeded in gaining obedience of the Rasti Kheri descendants who were maintaining a precarious Muslim hold over northern Chittagong in the face of Tripura and Arakanese aggressions on all sides. From 1513 to 1516 A D his authority over Chittagong was successfully challenged by Dhanyamanikya, a powerful Tripura monarch. Sultan Husain's hostilities with the neighbouring princes was undoubtedly an advantage of the Tripura king. When the death of Dhanyamanikya removed one of the inveterate enemies of Husain Shah, the latter pounced upon Chittagong with full force and reconquered it. The conquest of Chittagong was followed by the occupation of some parts of Arakan. The long period of weak government in Arakan after Batsaphyu's death, made the project of conquest much more easy. Sultan Husain Shah thus followed the suit of king Dhanyamanikya who had only few years before penetrated deep into Arakan. It may be supposed that Husain's expedition was commanded by the crown prince Nusrat who according to local tradition snatched Chittagong from the Arakanese. Whether such officers as Paragal Khan, Chhuti Khan, Amirza Khan and Khuda Bakhsh Khan took part in the victorious campaigns, cannot be said with certainty, but they got strong hold of the conquered territory and kept the enemies in check. From 1517 to 1538 A D Chittagong remained under the Gaudian control except a short lived occupation of northern Chittagong by Devamanikya. In fact, the Husain Shahi governors of Chittagong made their hold over the district so well founded that it became almost impossible for either the Arakanese or the Tripuras to challenge the hegemony of the Bengal sultanate even on a portion of the district.

Section 2. Chittagong under the Later Husain Shahi Rulers

The glorious reign of Sultan Husain Shah ended in 1525 A D and in the same year, his eldest son Nusrat Shah ascended the throne. The new king "inherited his father's good qualities to the full and by his apprenticeship in important administrative and military work, had acquired a thorough grasp of political problems".¹

The last years of Sultan Nusrat Shah were overshadowed by plots and conspiracies contrived by his courtiers. The Portuguese historians refer to one such case which had relation to Chittagong. According to the Portuguese historians, Khwaja Shihabuddin, a rich merchant of Chittagong and an influential noble at the royal court in collaboration with other nobles carried on underhand plot against Sultan Nusrat Shah. In order to achieve his aim, Khwaja Shihabuddin entered into an alliance with the Portuguese commanders. He promised them "to use his influence with the king" in procuring them "great facilities for trade and even to give them permission to build a fort in Chittagong, if they would only send an expedition to help him in his projects".² But the plan failed and Shihabuddin tried to escape to Persia by boarding a Persia bound vessel.

Nusrat Shah died in 1532 A D. He is a very familiar figure in local legends and traditions. According to the local tradition, Nasirabad a suburb of the city is named after the sultan whose another name was Nasir Shah.

The ruins of Nusrat's rule can still be seen in some places of the district. Mv. Hamidullah Khan refers to "the great tank in Fathabad and the mosque there, which was built of enamelled bricks". Referring to this mosque and the tank, the historian writes : "I have myself seen Nusrat's mosque which is now broken and

¹ H B, II, 153

² Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 33

ruined and filled with rubbish. His great tank, the length of which is 700 paces more or less still exists, but the water has become bad".¹ The tank is still known as 'Nusrat Badshah's dighi' and is one of the largest tanks in the pre-partitioned Bengal. But most part of the tank have now been dried up and turned to agricultural fields; residential villages have sprang up on the bank. Hamidullah Khan writes that the place was once a well known trade centre. The ruins of a palace situated near it existed within our narrator's memory. He further writes : 'People also say that a pucca house stood near it, which decayed and got covered with jungles and was full of snakes. Hence people set it on fire and burned it down with the serpents and all'.² In reference to other remains of Nusrat's rule the author says that, the foundation of the town of Bhalua, the digging of the Bhalua tank, and a mosque at Hat-hazari are generally referred to the time of Nusrat Shah.³

The *Rajamala* informs us of a shortlived Tripura occupation of Chittagong. According to it, king Devamanikya (1520-1535 AD), after annexing Bhulua, successfully marched on Chittagong and occupied the littoral part of northern Chittagong. The king soon after that, went on a pilgrimage to the sacred place of Falamati and took a bath in the holy water. To commemorate this ritual act and other religious observances he ordered coins to be engraved. The place was called Durasha by local people. This journey to the sacred place was followed by the occupation of Chittagong. This king returned to his capital after establishing a military post at Chittagong.⁴ Unfortunately, the *Rajamala* does not mention the date of the conquest. Probably, Devamanikya took advantage of

¹ 'Tarikh', p. 29; trans. & qt J A S B, XLI (1872), 336 - 337

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ দেবমানিক্য মহারাজা অতি শূভাজন।

ভুলুয়া আমল করি সমুদ্র গমন।।

ফলমতী ভীথে স্নান করে মহামতি।

মোহন মারিল তথা দান ধর্ম বতি।।

the political disorder which followed the assassination of Nusrat Shah and his successor Firuz Shah in 1532-33 A D. The Tripura hold over the district, however, lasted only for a short time. The closing years of the reign of Devamanikya were marked by confusion in the kingdom caused by the disastrous large-scale massacre of the Tripura army officers, which, according to their chroniclers, greatly undermined the military strength of the kingdom. This possibly resulted in the loss of Chittagong by the Tripuras.

Sultan Nusrat Shah was succeeded by his young son Alauddin Firuz Shah (1532 A D), who ruled only for a few months. A local poet named Sridhar mentions Sultan Firuz Shah as his patron.¹ The literary testimony thus proves the Bengal sultan's control over the district. The unfortunate young sultan was most probably murdered by his uncle Ghiyasuddin Mahmud, who next ascended the throne.

The accounts of the contemporary Portuguese chroniclers give plentiful evidence of the authority of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah over Chittagong.² Besides these, a contemporary mosque inscription³ refers to the name of the sultan during whose reign the edifice was built. Although most parts of the inscription including the date have been effaced, the name of the sultan is luckily preserved. Dr. Abdul Karim makes a painstaking study of the inscription, succeeds in reading the name of the king, and

দরশা বলিয়া সেই স্থানের নাম বলে।
 স্মান তপ'গু তথাতে নৃপতি করিলে।।
 এ তীর্থ করিয়া রাজা ফিরিল তখন।
 চাট্রোগমে থানা রাখি রাজ্যে আগমন।।

—*Rajamala*, II, 33

¹ *B S I*, 1940, p. 79

² See *infra*, ch x

³ *J A S P*, XII (1967), 325-330

correctly indentified him with Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah whose kunyat was also Abul Muzaffar.

From the very beginning of his rule, Sultan Mahmud Shah was very anxious about the rising power of Sher Khan. He met his first reverse at the hands of the Afghan hero in March 1534 A D at the battle of Surajgarh. The sultan being helpless, made an alliance with the Portuguese of Chittagong to fight back the Pathans. But this did not appreciably improve his position. In 1535 A D, Sher Khan suddenly appeared before the gate of Gaud. The Portuguese in cooperation with the Bengal army offered a stubborn resistance, but failed. Sher Khan, however, withdrew his siege on money consideration. In 1538 A D, Sher Khan again invaded Bengal and drove out the sultan from his capital. Probably, during this period Sher Khan sent his general, called by the Portuguese historians as 'Nogazil' to occupy Chittagong. The Bengal throne was soon captured by Sher but Chittagong became a scene of private war between two Husain Shahi 'vassals', Amirza Khan and Khuda Bakhsh Khan.¹ This event virtually brought the Husain Shahi control over Chittagong to an end.

¹ See *Infra*, ch, viii, See 1

Appendix. Husain Shahi Officers in Chittagong

The contemporary Bengali and Portuguese sources shed light on the subject of the organization of government in Chittagong under the Husain Shahi dynasty. The two translated *Mahabharatas*, the *Portuguese Chronicles* and two Bengali poems provide an ample scope for both facts and speculations concerning this subject. The *Paragali Mahabharata* states that Sultan Husain Shah appointed Paragal Khan, lashkar khwaja and entrusted him with the task of the management of Tripura affairs.¹ The august Khan performed governmental duties in the assigned territory with the help of his son and grandson.² In the same source he is stated to be the son of Rasti Khan³ (possibly Masnad-i-Ala Rasti Khan of the Barbak Shahi mosque inscription in Hathazari u. z.). In the *Chhuti Khani Mahabharata*, it is stated that Chhuti Khan, son of

¹ শ্রীযুত লস্কর খাজা অভি সে সন্মতি।

... ..

সুলতান হোসন পঞ্চম গোড়ি নাথ।

ত্রিপুরের ভার সমর্পিল যাব হাথ।

—Qt B S I, 1940, p. 258 - 259

² পুত্র পৌত্র রাজ্য করে খান মহামতি।

—Qt, D C Sen, *Bangabhasha O Sahitya*, p. 148

³ রাস্তি খান তনয় বহুল গুণনিধি।

... ..

নৃপতি হোসন সাহা। চৌড়ের জিহবা

তান হক সেনাপতি হওন্ত লস্কর।।

লস্করী বিষয় পার আইবন্ত চলিয়া।।

চাটিগ্রাম চলি গেলা হরষিত হইয়া।। —*ibid*

Lashkar Paragal Khan was one of the commanders of Sultan Husain Shah. He received the title 'Lashkar' by succession and succeeded in his paternal post. His administrative seat was situated close to the Chandrasekhar Hills in the north of Chittagong. The place was bounded by the river Feni on all sides, and by the sublime mountains on the east.¹ It roughly corresponds with modern Paragalpur in the Mirsarai u.z.

Dr Abdul Karim expresses doubts about the supposed governorship of Paragal Khan and Chhuti Khan over the whole of Chittagong. He rightly points out that *lashkar*² does in no sense mean the governor or viceroy and hence both father and son could not claim the honour of being the governors of Chittagong.³ Dr A Karim's view is strengthened by another argument that Paragalpur, situated close to the northern border of the district is not known to have ever been the capital of the whole of the district.

¹ তান (হোসেন শাহ) এক সেনাপতি লস্কর ছ'টি খান।

... ..
চাটগ্রাম নগরের নিকট উত্তরে।
চন্দ্রশেখর নাম পর্বত উত্তরে।
— — গিরি তারি পৈত্রিক বসতি।

... ..
ফণী নামে নদীএ বেষ্টিত চারিধার।
পূর্ব দিগে মহাগিরি পার নাহি তার।
লস্কর পরাগল খানের তনয়।
সমরে নিভ'র ছ'টি খন মহাশয়।

... ..
লস্করী বিষয় পাইয়া মহামতি।
সাম দান ল'ভ ভেদে পালে বসুমতি।

—*ibid.*; also B S I, 1940, pp. 267 - 268

² Lashkar in Persian means 'an army', 'a camp' When Lashkri, 'one belonging to an army', 'a soldier'. (H J, p. 507)

³ S P, (No. I, 1371 B S), p. 163f.

The two genealogical tables,¹ contained in the *Maqtul Husain*, written by the local poet Muhammad Khan, have recently aroused the interest of the historians. In the pedigree, the poet mentions Rasti as 'Chatigram deshapati' (the lord of the province of Chittagong), an intermediate person who is almost unanimously identified with the Rasti Khan of the Barbak Shahi mosque inscription in the Hathazari u. z. In the inscription Rasti Khan styles himself as Majlis-i-Ala. About the identification of his two immediate descendants, Mina Khan and Gabhur Khan, the scholars are divided in their opinions. Dr A H Dani² wants to identify Gabhur Khan and Mina Khan with Paragal Khan and Chhuti Khan respectively of the two translated *Mahabharatas*, where they are shown as son and grandson of Rasti Khan. Dr Abdul Karim presents his own view with sufficient reason that Rasti Khan's descendants were divided into two lines. One is the Paragali line residing in Paragalpur south of the Feni River and the other is the Muhammad Khani line which might have lived somewhere in central Chittagong.³

Dr Abdul Karim could not find out any satisfactory reason for the poet's complete ignorance of the Paragali line of Rasti Khan. In one place, however, the poet explains the reason of his avoidance of unnecessary details which might make his work burdensome. An opinion in this connection can be formed that the Paragali line was either perished by the Tripura attack by king Devamanikya about the year 1532 A D or slowly withered into obscurity by the successive political changes. Probably this was the reason why the poet did not take notice of this line.

It appears that Rasti Khan's post became somewhat hereditary. With the decadence of the Paragali line, the Muhammad Khani

¹ For a full text of the tables see *B S I*, 1940, pp. 626-630.

² *The Proceedings of the All Pakistan History Conference*, First Session, 1951, p. 201.

³ *S P* (No. 1, 1371 B. S.), p. 161.

line came into the forefront. Dr A Karim and others have identified Hamza Khan, the great grandson of Rasti Khan with Amirza Khan (Amirzacao or Amarzacao of the Portuguese writers). In the pedigree, he is described as the conqueror of the Pathans and the Tripuras.¹ Mr D C Bhattacharya took Khuda Bakhsh Khan (Codavascao of the Portuguese writers), the rival of Amirza Khan to be a Pathan and made the latter defeated by Hamza Khan.² But this is a weak assumption. Khuda Bakhsh Khan might be a Pathan but there is no proof to show his reverses at the hands of Amirza Khan. The Portuguese accounts, on the contrary, bear evidence of Khuda Bakhsh Khan's victory over Amirza Khan. Dr Abdul Karim has rightly pointed out that the Pathan who suffered defeat at the hands of Hamza Khan or Amirza Khan was the Nogazil, the Pathan general sent by Sher Shah,³ and the fact is borne out by the Portuguese evidence. Of the victory of Hamza Khan over the Tripuras it can be said that Hamza Khan might have taken an active part in repulsing the occupation army of Devamanikya, who according to the *Rajamala* held possession of northern Chittagong for a brief period.

A Bengali poem named *Laili Majnu* written by poet Daulat Wazir Bahram Khan supplies information which shed light on the proposed governorship of Chittagong. In the attached genealogical account, the poet gives a life sketch of an illustrious person named Hamid Khan. He is stated to be a virtuous man who bestowed provisions generously not only on the poor and needy but on the beasts and insects as well. When king Husain Shah heard of his bounteous character he got angry and wanted to test his virtuous disposition. At his order several terrible methods were employed to put him to death, but every time Hamid Khan emerged alive from the jaws of Death by some miraculous means. This made the king convinced of the

¹ কবিতা ভাষণে বর্ণিত জিনিয়া দ্বিপদ্রাগণ
লীলায় পাঠানগণ জিনি

² *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Patrika*, 54th year, Nos 1 and 2

³ *S P*, (1371 B S) p. 164

worth of his chief wazir. King Husain Shah then dispatched wazir Hamid Khan to take charge (adhikari) of Chatigrama. The officer happily spent the rest of his life there performing all kinds of virtuous deeds.¹ Thus the chief wazir (Pradhan Wazir) Hamid Khan became an 'adhikari' of Chittagong and he faithfully executed his duties that had been assigned to him. A hypothetical view may be expressed that Hamid Khan was posted at Fateabad, which, according to our poet is another name of Chatigrama.² During the subsequent Pathan rule, his descendants were forced to lead almost an obscure life. But under the Arakanese regime (c. 1580-1666 A D) they were promoted to the rank of nobility and accredited with the title 'Daulat Wazir'. The poet most probably wrote his work during the governorship of 'Nripati' Nizam Shah' an Arakanese governor of Chittagong.

The Portuguese historical works supply a detailed account which is extremely valuable regarding the governorship of Chittagong under the later Husain Shahi rule. The Portuguese historians mention at least two 'Moorish' officers namely Codavascas or Khuda Bakhsh Khan and Amirzacao or Amirza Khan, as 'vassals' of the Bengal sultan. But they do not mention the date of their appointment. Nevertheless, their appointment must have taken place earlier than 1528 A D. While narrating the occurrences of events in that year, the Portuguese historians mention the name of these two officers. Of these two officers Khuda Bakhsh Khan seems to be the more powerful. De Barros writes of him as 'Hum Principe Mouro Grande Senhor'.³ or a Muslim prince or great nobleman. In his map, a large tract of land comprising southern Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts, northern Arakan has been shown under 'Estado do Codavascam' or the state of Khuda Bakhsh Khan. De Barros writes that his territory lies between Bengal and the kingdom of Arakan.⁴ He further writes that the Chatigan River divides the kingdom

¹ B P P V, I & II, 14-16

² নগর ফতেহাবাদ দেখিতে পদুরে সাধ

চাটগ্রাম সন্নিবাস প্রকাশ। — B P P V, I & II, 14-16

³ De Barros, p. 454

⁴ ... se mette entre Bengala e o Reino de Arracam ... *Ibid.*

of Bengala from the territory of Khuda Bakhsh Khan.¹ This narration explicitly points out that the kingdom of Khuda Bakhsh Khan lay wholly to the south of the Karnaphuli, which possibly borders the territorial jurisdictions of Amirza Khan and Khuda Bakhsh Khan. Castanheda writes that Khuda Bakhsh Khan and Amirza Khan were the two muslim vassals of the king of Bengal.² De Barros attaches a weight to Khuda Bakhsh Khan on two grounds; first, the historian characterises Khuda Bakhsh Khan with the titles denoting his office and secondly, he draws a distinction between Khuda Bakhsh Khan and Amirza Khan by describing the former as almost an independent ruler and includes the latter directly under the kingdom of Bengal. The site of the administrative seat of Khuda Bakhsh Khan's territory is not precisely known. It might be in Sore, a city located by De Barros on the left bank of a river (possibly the Sankha). A city named Codavascam, spotted farther interior in the map may also claim to be his administrative headquarters. Another city perhaps the chief port of his kingdom was Chacoria which roughly corresponds to the modern u. z. headquarters of the same name, situated on the mouth of the Matamuhuri. The early or later career of this interesting person has not been illuminated by the Portuguese sources.

De Barros and other Portuguese historians relate that a state of war was always existing between Khuda Bakhsh Khan and his neighbour Amirza Khan.³ Probably Khuda Bakhsh Khan was jealous of either appointment or promotion of Amirza Khan to the governorship of Chittagong. Amirza Khan as a governor of Chittagong and a descendant of Rasti Khan have justly demanded allegiance from Khuda Bakhsh Khan, but he could never receive it. Their bitter quarrel reached a climax during the last years of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah.

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- 1 ... O rio de Chatigam divide o Reino de Bengala das terras do Codovascam... *Ibid.*, p. 452
 - 2 ... Senhores mouros vassallos del rey de Bengala... Fernao Lopez De Castanheda, *Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India pelos Portugueses*, Liv. VIII, cap. c x c, p. 452
 - 3 ... e discordia que entao havia entre Codovascam, e Amarzacam, pretendendo Cada hum Ser Senhor da cidade... —De Barros, p. 503

CHAPTER VIII

CHITTAGONG DURING THE AFGHAN RULE

Section 1. War of Supremacy over Chittagong

The history of Bengal from 1538 to 1576 A D may properly be termed as the Afghan period. In 1538 A D Sultan Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah, the last ruler of the Husain Shahi dynasty was defeated and dethroned by Sher Khan Sur who thus occupied Gaud. The rule of the House of Sher Shah terminated with the murder of his grandson Firuz Shah (in 1554 A D) by Mubariz Khan who seized the throne immediately after and assumed the title of Muhammad Adil Shah. But the Bengal throne was occupied by Muhammad Khan Sur, who not being satisfied by declaring independence, rushed to Delhi to capture the imperial sceptre. But he was slain in a deadly engagement with the Delhi army in 1555 A D and Delhi reestablished its authority over Bengal although for a very brief period. Khizr Khan, the worthy son of Muhammad Khan Sur, captured the Bengal throne and took the title of Ghiyasuddin Bahadur Shah. He not only proclaimed himself independent ruler but avenged his father's death by defeating and killing Muhammad Adil Shah (1557 A D). The rule of the House of Muhammad Khan Sur terminated in 1564 A D and the authority over Bengal passed into the hands of the Karrani family. The Karrani rule lasted till 1576 A D and in this year Daud Karrani was defeated and dethroned by the Mughals, and Bengal was incorporated in the Mughal Empire.

The above is a brief survey of the history of Bengal from 1538 to 1576 A D, but the history of Chittagong is different. The history of Chittagong during this period is chiefly a history of almost

continuous wars and turmoils. The ambitious sovereigns of Bengal, Tripura and Arakan engaged themselves in a deadly war of supremacy over the district, resulting in the frequent change of overlordship. The activities of the Portuguese pirates aggravated the situation. To give a chronological account of the events that occurred during this period is difficult owing mainly to the paucity of source materials. Nevertheless, the sources are not altogether wanting. For example, the two *Chronicles*, the Arakanese and the Tripura supply invaluable material in reconstructing the history of the district during this period. The accounts of the Portuguese historians are equally important for us. Besides, some Bengali poems, an Arakanese temple inscription, the mosque inscriptions, the numismatic sources, the accounts of foreign travellers help us to solve many problems.

The great Afghan warrior Sher Khan Sur occupied Gaud, in 1538 - 39 A D.¹ It appears that a little before or during his final assaults of Gaud, he sent his generals to occupy the outlying districts. Thus he sent his captain, named the Nogazil by the Portuguese, to Chittagong.² Sher Khan as an expert military commander realized the strategic importance of Chittagong, which was at that time 'the chief port and the principal gateway to Bengal'. Already a base of the Portuguese activities, Chittagong became their stronghold as a result of the latest treaty concluded between Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah and the Portuguese.³ So to prevent the Portuguese from coming to the relief of Mahmud Shah was an urgent task for Sher Khan, and probably with this end in view, he sent the Nogazil to occupy Chittagong.

¹ K R Qanungo, *Sher Shah and His Times*, p. 189

² ...Enisto chegou a chatigao per mendado de Xercansur hu capiteo Potan e por Nogazel. *Castanheda*, p. 452 Referring to a contemporary Persian manuscript, Buchanan Hamilton states that Sher Khan occupied Sonargaon and Chatgaon at the same time (*Martin's Eastern India*, III, 619)

³ See *Infra*, ch. x

The Nogazil hurriedly arrived at Chittagong, possibly by avoiding the vigilance of the Bengal army. But how and from where he arrived at Chittagong is not known. What is known is that the capture of Gaud by Sher Khan in March, 1538 A D gave a signal to the private war between the two Husain Shahi governors, Amirza Khan (Amirzacao) and Khuda Bakhsh Khan (Codavascao) for supremacy over the port town.¹ Nuno Fernandez Freire, chief of the Portuguese custom-house, "was asked to decide the quarrels between the Moorish governors who did not fully acknowledge the authority of the king of Bengal".² The Portuguese historian Castanheda explicitly says that the Nogazil "took possession of the town" of Chittagong.³ Mr N B Roy thinks that the Nogazil took advantage of the dispute between the governors in his favour and captured Chittagong.⁴

The course of events at Gaud during that time was fast changing. In July 1538, the army of Humayun entered Gaud⁵ and the Afghans traced back to Bihar. The statement of the Riyaz that "the ports of Sonargaon and Chatgaon, etc. came into the possession of the Emperor"⁶ is quite correct, since it is confirmed by the Portuguese evidence.⁷ The Mughal capture of Gaud undou-

¹ ...No tempo que Xerchan tomou a cidade de Gouro ... Achou aquella cidade mui alvovariado com as guerras, e discordia que entao havia entre Codavascam, e Amarzacam pretendendo cada hum ser senhor da cidade — *De Barros*, p. 503

² Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 66

³ O Nogazil de Xercansur, & tomasse a cidade. *Castanheda*, p. 453

⁴ *H B*, II, 174

⁵ R C Majumdar et al, *An Advanced History of India*, p. 437 ; also Qanungo, *op. cit.*, p. 193

⁶ *Riyaz*, p. 142 ; Qanungo, *op. cit.*, p. 222

⁷ ...neste tempo chegarao os Mogores ao Gouro ... *Castanheda*, p. 453 ; also R C Majumdar et al, *op. cit.*, p. 437

btedly put the Nogazil in discomfiture. It appears that the body of troops under the Nogazil's command was not adequate to defend his own position. In the meantime, the Portuguese military aid which was earlier promised to Muhmud Shah, reached Chittagong from Goa. The aid was in the form of a naval expedition (armada) and consisted of nine vessels commanded by Vasco Peres de Sampayo.¹ Nuno Fernanandoz Freire, who had been appointed 'chief of the custom house' (of the port town of Chittagong) by Sultan Mahmud Shah not only declared himself an ally of Amirza Khan but intervened on his behalf & Nuno Fernandez os concertou, & ficou Amarzacao). He advised Sampayo to take possession of the town, which according to the Portuguese historians, he could easily have done.² But Sampayo felt embarrassed. He came to assist the sultan, but the existing political situation upset him. He had no directive for territorial conquest. Meanwhile, Amirza Khan collected a body of troops and sent it against Sher Shah's captain. The latter became virtually a captive in the hands of Amirza Khan.³ The Nogazil in his confinement asked Nuno Fernandez Freire for intervention. He preferred rather to be a prisoner of the Portuguese than of the 'Bengalas'.⁴ Fernandez rushed into the besieged house of Sher Shah's Nogazil.⁵ It seems that Fernandez had some hold on the soldiers of Amirza Khan because he could dissuade them from seizing the Nogazil.⁶ But strangely, he himself with fifty Portuguese whom Sampayo had sent ashore eventually captured the Nogazil and shut him up in one of Sampayo's vessels, whence after six month's captivity the Nogazil managed to escape by bribing

¹ *Castanheda*, p. 452

² *Campos, op. cit.*, p. 42

³ *Castanheda*, p. 453

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 454

⁶ *Campos, op. cit.*, p. 42

a subordinate.¹ The Portuguese historians do not give any direct reference to his activities hereafter.

The Portuguese historians refer to a military adventurer by name Suleiman Baisia who played an important role in this scene of strife. They state that a 'galliot' with sixty armed Moors of Suleiman Baisia arrived at a place on the bank of a river, within four leagues from Chittagong.² Having been known about the Portuguese alliance with the Bengal sultan, the soldiers of this 'galliot' engaged some of Sampayo's men in their service,³ but sanpayo "who had behaved cowardly all throughout, would not send any more men for their help, nor send a ship to defend a Portuguese merchantman, which was in danger, in spite of Fernandez's repeatedly asking him to do so".⁴ The Portuguese soldiers under Nuno Fernandez Freire, Diogo Rebelo and Francisco De Barros and in collaboration with the troops of Raja Suleiman conducted the defence.⁵ But the Portuguese historians do not mention the name of the attacking party. The coalition of the Portuguese and the troops of Suleiman Baisia was routed by the attackers. In this engagement many Portuguese soldiers including Nuno Fernandez were injured.⁶

¹ *Castanheda*, p. 454

² ...Em quento esteve em Chatigam aportou em hum rio quatro leguas daquela cidade huma galeota com sessenta Turcos, que se derrotaram da Armada de Soleimao Baxia. *De Barros*, p. 503. ...E estado assi a cousa, forao ter a Bengala sessenta Tarcos em hua galeota que se apartarao na partida dadem da armada de Coleymao baxa...& os Portugueses erao mortos polos Turcos, & dando a mesma noua em Bengala, forasa meter em hum rio quatro legoas de Chatigao. *Castanheda*, p. 454. The 'Turcos' of the Portuguese historians has been translated by Campos as Moors.

³ *Castanheda*, p. 454

⁴ *Campos*, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43

⁵ *Castanheda*, pp. 454-455

⁶ *Ibid*,

It is really a very difficult problem to say definitely who among half a dozen contendents could ultimately gain the hold of Chittagong. However, an attempt to reach a logical conclusion partly by analyzing the events and partly by guesswork may be permissible. The probable parties who participated singly or jointly in this war for supremacy were the Nogazil, the Pathan commander; Amirza Khan, governor of Chittagong; Khuda Bakhsh Khan, the feudatory chief of southern Chittagong; Suleiman Baisia, ruler of the Bhati; the Portuguese; and an unnamed attacking party. Taking all the persons and the train of events into consideration, the anomalous political position during that time may be briefly arranged in the following orderly sequence.

The Pathan attack on Gaud in 1538 A D put everything in confusion and gave signal to starting a rivalry between Amirza Khan and Khuda Bakhsh Khan, who had already been at daggers drawn. In the earlier stage, Khuda Bakhsh Khan was undoubtedly in an advantageous position, but in the later stage of the struggle, he suddenly disappeared from the scene and nothing practically is known about him after this. At this stage, Sher Khan's general the Nogazil arrived at Chittagong and taking advantage of the internecine war between Amirza Khan and Khuda Bakhsh Khan occupied the port town of Chittagong. But the capture of Gaud by emperor Humayun in July 1538 A D, stopped all kinds of assistance to the Nogazil and placed him under a severe pressure of unfavourable circumstances. The Portuguese naval help, earlier sought by Mahmud Shah arrived at Chittagong at this time, but remained inactive. It appears that Sampayo, the commander of the expedition, did not want to interfere on behalf of Sultan Mahmud Shah immediately, but kept watch from a close distance on the course of events. After much reluctance he joined Amirza Khan who was then busy in laying siege to the Pathan army under the Nogazil. The besieged Nogazil "asked for the help of Nuno Fernandez Freire preferring rather to be a prisoner of the Portuguese than of the Bengalas". Fernandez responded to the appeal of the Nogazil and went straight to his besieged quarters.

'He dissuaded them from sieging the Nogazil, but he himself with fifty Portuguese whom Sampayo had sent ashore, eventually captured the Nogazil and imprisoned him in one of Sampayo's vessels'. After six months captivity in the hands of the Portuguese the Nogazil "managed to escape by bribing a subordinate". The Portuguese historians do not mention anything of his fate hereafter, but it is evident that the war of supremacy was not over. At this time, a 'galeot' with sixty armed 'Turcos' of Raja Suleiman joined the allied forces of Amirza Khan and the Portuguese. It appears that the confederacy of Amirza Khan, the Portuguese and Suleiman Baisia collapsed. The Portuguese, according to their own historians, were defeated and a number of them were injured. The Portuguese accounts abuptly stop at this stage giving nobody the honour of the conquest of Chittagong.

At this stage, an Arakanese inscription,¹ discovered at Chittagong, gives much relief to our confused knowledge. The inscription engraved on a silver plate clearly points out that about 1540-41 A D, Chittagong was definitely under the Arakanese occupation. Can the unnamed attacking party in the Portuguese narratives be identified with the contemporary Arakanese monarch Min Bin ? The war-torn political scene provided an excellent opportunity to Min Bin (Meng Beng or Sultan), said to be a very powerful monarch of Arakan to conquer Chittagong. The changing political events in Tripura capital relating to the death of Devamanikya and the succession of Bijoymanikya in 1540 A D prevented the Tripuras from meddling in the Chittagong affairs. The exhausted participants in the war of supremacy were no match for the powerful Arakanese monarch Min Bin or Sultan (1531-1553 A D). The invading forces of Min Bin at first reduced Khuda Bakhsh Khan to such a pitiable condition that he completely disappeared from the scene, never to be heard of again. The victor then proceeded towards the port town and crushed all the contending parties to such an extent that the names of Amirza Khan, Suleiman Baisia, and the Nogazil were blotted out of

¹ *Researches of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, II, 383

existence. Min Bin's military exploit has an analogy with a story in Hindu mythology. The story runs as follows : Once there arose a discord between Gaja, a mammoth and Kacchapa, a giant size sea tortoise. Their frequent engagements in deadly fighting caused great annoyance to the living beings on earth. But neither of the contentents could defeat the other. Seeing them fighting each other Gadura, Lord Vishnu's aerial carrier who might surpass the eagle of Sindbad's tales in size, thought of feeding upon the monsters. He then fell upon his tired prey and gobbled up one after another and thus saved the earth from the turmoils of the two monsters. In almost a similar manner, Min Bin annihilated the contending parties and conquered Chittagong either in the later part of the year 1539 A D or in the early part of the next year.

The proper identification of the two personalities, one the Nogazil, who was sent by Sher Khan to conquer Chittagong and the other Raja Suleiman, who sent a naval detachment to Chittagong, is difficult to be established satisfactorily. In the *History of Bengal*, the Nogazil has been identified with Nawazish¹ who is comparatively a little known figure in the history of the Pathans. There is no doubt that the Nogazil is the Portuguese corruption of either the name or the title of the commander who was sent by Sher Khan to occupy Chittagong. The Portuguese usually corrupt the native names in their own tongue and most of them may be recognized without much difficulty. But the case of the Nogazil is different. Castanheda clearly speaks of him as a Pathan captain of Sher Khan. In the opinion of Dr Abdur Rahim, the Nogazil was no other than Nizam Khan Sur,² a brother of Sher Khan Sur. But we have no authoritative information in our hand to prove Nizam Khan's hold over Chittagong, except the controversial reference to a ruler named Nizam Shah Sur³ in a Bengali poem named *Laili Majnu*,

¹ H B, II, 174

² J A S B, XVIII (1952), 24

³ চাটিগ্রাম অধিপতি নানামত মহামতি

নৃপতি নিয়াম শাহা শূর।

একশত ছত্রধারী সভানের অধিকারী

ধবল অরুণ গজেশ্বর ॥ —*Laili Majnu* ed. A Sharif

composed by poet Daulat Wazir Baharam Khan. Here the ruler is called nripati and shah, the two titles which could be adopted only by an independent ruler and therefore could not be applicable to a commander. Even if it be argued that these were the superfluous expressions of the poet in exalting his patron, there remains ample scope for doubt. The poet's reference to the ruler as "the master of a white and red elephant" raises suspicion on this identification, because only the Buddhist kings of Burma and Arakan are traditionally known to have been the owners of the sacred animal.¹ Most probably the poet composed his poem during the reigns of those kings who used to take the title of the white and red elephant (1612-1645 A D).² It is a fact that the Arakanese monarch and their viceroys of Chittagong were accustomed at that time to take Muslim names besides their Arakanese and Pali names.

The present writer is inclined to identify the Nogazil with the term either nau qazi meaning an officer of the navy or nakhuda which means shipmaster. Qazi (pronounced as guazil, gozil etc. by the Portuguese) in those days was not merely a judicial officer, he was also vested with various kinds of powers and functions. Here he might mean a naval officer commanding a company of naval troops. The word nakhuda is supposed to have been derived from Persian nau khoda. "The Nakhuda or owner of the ship", according to the author of the *Ain*, "is evidently a short form of nav khuda. He fixes the course of the ship".³ The term has been defined in the *Hobson-Jobson* as "a skipper; the master of a

¹ Fr Manrique refers to the king of Arakan to be the "possessor of the White Elephant" (*Manrique*, I, 283). Mirza Nathan also speaks of the Arakanese king as the master of white elephant (Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, trans. M I Borah, I, 404)

² *J A S B*, XV (1846), 234

³ *Ain*, I, 280

native vessel".¹ Allama Nadvi suggests that the word is a compound of Hindi *nao* and Persian *khuda*, meaning a master of the boat, a captain.² The word **ناخد** is sometimes pronounced as **ناجود** (*nakhuja*).³ Probably, the word in this form has been referred to in their historical works. It should be noted that the Portuguese writers put definite article (the) before the word *Nogazil* which indicates rather a post than the name of a person.

It is equally difficult to establish the identity of Raja Suleiman Baisia who, according to the Portuguese sources, sent a small naval detachment to occupy Chittagong. Dr Abdul Karim is inclined to identify Raja Suleiman with Suleiman Khan of the Karrani dynasty.⁴ But this identification is doubtful. Can this Suleiman Baisia be identified with Suleiman Khan, father of Isa Khan and the reputed founder of the principality of Bhati? The reference to this person in the *Akbarnama* helps us to answer the problem.

The father of this chief (Isa Khan) belonged to the Bais tribe of the Rajputs. In that fluvial region (i.e., the Bhati) he continually displayed presumption and refractoriness. In the time of Salim Khan, Taj Khan and Darlya Khan went to that country with large forces and after many contests he surrendered. In a short while, he again rebelled. They managed by a trick to get hold of him and sent him to the abode of annihilation and sold his two sons Isa and Ismail to merchants.⁵

¹ *H J*, p. 612

² Nadvi, *op. cit.*, p. 6

³ *Ibid.*, p. 126

⁴ *J A S P*, IX (1964), 29

⁵ *Akbar Nama*, III (Beveridge), 432. Dr N K Bhattasali makes an effort to identify Raja Suleiman with some other person. After an extensive study of the local traditions in the Bhati area, the scholar presents a theory that Kalidas Gajdani,

The passage provides sufficient evidence of the military prowess of the adventurer, although, he is not mentioned by name anywhere in the book. The Bais clan of the Rajputs to which Suleiman Baisia belonged was well known in medieval India for bravery. As the Bhati is a riverain and a marshy tract, it is likely that Suleiman Baisia possessed a fleet and he might have sent a portion of it to occupy Chittagong. Why Suleiman has been called as Raja by the Portuguese is not difficult to answer, As Suleiman was originally a Rajput, he liked much to be called Raja inspite of his conversion to Islam.

Section 2. Chittagong under the successive Regimes

It has already been observed that Sher Shah's hold on the district was of short duration. The district passed on to the Arakanese either in the later part of the year 1539 A D or in the early part of the next year. A silver plate inscription¹ in the Arakanese language, attached to an Arakanese temple, dedicated by an Arakanese governor of Chittagong serves to explain many interesting details regarding the political and cultural condition of the district

the hero of the traditions was the father of Isa Khan. Dr Bhattasali thinks that the sultan, to whose daughter Kalidas was married, was Sultan Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah, the last ruler of the Husain Shahi dynasty. "With the massacre of Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah's sons by the son of Sher Shah, Kalidas, as the husband of a daughter of Mahmud Shah, possibly considered himself de jure successor, to the kingdom of Mahmud Shah", and in that pretension he must have sent an expedition to help Am'rza Khan, the Mahmud Shahi governor of Chittagong against the Nogazil. (B P P, 1929, p 35)

¹ *Asiatic Researches*, II (1790), 383

during that time. The inscription was brought to limelight by Sir John Shore, who read it out before the alumni of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. The inscription has been thoroughly examined by Rai S C Das Bahadur in the light of contemporary political and social aspects. The naming of the Arakanese governor and mentioning of the Arakanese era indicate the Arakanese sway over Chittagong. Rai S C Das Bahadur remarks : "The Chandilah Raja being a Magh Chief must have used the Magh era which was and is still current in Chittagong, the year 904 of that era corresponding with 1541-42 A D ... This was the time when Chittagong had passed under Maga influence."¹ This conclusion is also arrived at by a scholar of no less eminence than Sir A P Phayre²

Thus it is evident that the Arakanese king conquered Chittagong by overthrowing the confederacy of Amirza Khan, the Portuguese and Suleiman Baisia in 1539-40 A D. The Arakanese king appointed Chandilah Raja governor of the province.

King Min Bin (Meng Beng or Sultan, 1531-1553 A D) has been stated in the *Arakanese Chronicle* as one of the powerful monarchs of Arakan. He, in the words of the chronicler, kept Ramu and Chittagong inspite of raids there by the Tripuras while he was engaged by Tabin Shwehti, and coins bearing his name and styling him sultan were struck at Chittagong.³ The adoption of magnificent Muslim name 'sultan' and striking of coins from Chittagong mint testify to his authority over Chittagong. It may be recalled that after Ba tsa phyu or Kalimah Shah (1459-1482 A D) it was Min Bin who has been credited with the achievement of conquering Chittagong. The intervening regime of eight monarchs between Ba tsa phyu and Min Bin could possibly never claim their sway over Chittagong, King Min Bin had to fight almost singlehanded with his neighbouring enemies. He not only emerged victorious from the engagements

¹ J B T R S, VII (1905), pp. 5-6

² Phayre, *op. cit.*, p. 172n

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 79, 80

but extended the boundary of his kingdom on all sides.

Both the *Radzawang* and the *Rajamala* shed light on the changing scenes of political events during the period. The *Rajamala* does not precisely tell us of the occupation of Chittagong by the Arakanese, which might result in the flight of the Pathan governor of Chittagong to the Tripura court. The *Rajamala* informs us that the Pathan chief of Chittagong with his army numbering not less than one thousand took shelter in Tripura. Can this fugitive Pathan chief be identified with the Nogazil of the Portuguese historians? The Portuguese sources state that the Nogazil fled from the Portuguese duress. The fugitive Pathan chief prayed for the intervention of the Tripura king Bijoymanikya (c. 1540-c. 1571 A D) to conquer Chittagong and it was granted. King Bijoymanikya presently employed the run away Pathan soldiers under his service as mercenaries.

The *Rajamala* narrates the invasion of Chittagong by king Bijoymanikya who was probably the greatest conqueror among the Tripura kings after Dhanyamanikya. The *Chronicle* states that the king who had been in command of two thousand troops led the campaign in person. The exiled Pathan chief of Chittagong (? the Nogazil) with his thousand Pathan troops joined the expedition. More troops and carriages under the command of the Tripura Wazir followed the advancing troops under royal command.¹ The combined operation was crowned with success and the Pathan chief regained his position. The *Tripura Chronicle* does not, however, furnish this event with date.

The *Arakanese Chronicle* supplies indirect evidence of the successful Tripura operation in Chittagong. It states that "while Meng Beng was thus engaged (with the invading Burman king in

¹ চাউগ্রাম চলিল বিজয় মহারাজা।
দুই সহস্র চলিলেক সৈন্য মহাভজা।
চাউগ্রাম রাজা সঙ্গে সহস্র পাঠান।
প্রচণ্ড উজীর সঙ্গে সহস্র বঙ্গ যান॥

1546-47 A D), an enemy had appeared from the north called in the Arakanese history the Thek or Sak King by which term the Raja of Tripura appears to be meant. He had penetrated to Ramu.¹ The *Arakanese Chronicle* thus corroborates the narration of the *Tripura Chronicle* regarding the Tripura conquest of Chittagong. Fortunately, the *Arakanese Chronicle* furnishes the event with date (c. 1546 A D) and territorial extent of the conquest (upto Ramu).

The Tripura conquest, however, lasted only for a very brief period. The *Arakanese Chronicle* tells of the Arakanese reoccupation of Chittagong immediately after the Burman war with Arakan was over though the *Tripura Chronicle* says nothing of it. The *Arakanese Chronicle* states that Min Bin not only regained his lost possessions but retained it till his death in 1553 A D. Soon after this, the Arakanese again lost Chittagong, A close study of the *Tripura Chronicle* suggests that the Tripuras, in collaboration with the Pathans must have regained Chittagong. Had it not been so, then how the Pathan governor of Chittagong could indulge himself in a secret union with the Gaud Sultan. Probably, Bijoymanikya reconquered Chittagong by defeating the Arakanese in the very beginning of the rule of Dik Kha (1553-54 A D), successor to Min Bin. The king appointed the Pathan commander to be a governor of Chittagong. The *Rajamala* states an uprising of the Pathan mercenaries against the Tripura government. This revolt was due to non-payment of arrear salary to the Pathan soldiers at the time of Chittagong campaign.² They not only killed the chief minister (wazir) of the king but made preparations to plunder the capital. The Pathan chief of Chittagong was then hatching a plan to usurp the Tripura throne by murdering the king.³ He even secretly affected a union of Chittagong with Gaud.⁴

¹ Phayre, *op. cit.*, p. 79

² *Rajamala*, II, 45

³ তথা চাটিগ্রামে সেই পাঠান বব্বর।
রাজাকে মারিতে যুক্তি করেনে অপর।। — *Ibid.*

⁴ পাঠানের তবে রাজা জিজ্ঞাসিল পদনি।
বঙ্গে চাটিগ্রামে পাঠান যুক্তি হৈছে শুনিল।। — *Ibid.* p. 46

But the plot leaked out at an unguarded moment and the king, thereupon, ordered the Pathans to be captured and sacrificed before the temple of the fourteen gods. Chittagong was again brought under Tripura subjection.

The Pathan chief of Chittagong fled to Gaud and reported the matter to the sultan.¹ The news greatly infuriated the sultan who without delay sent a large reinforcement² under Mamarak Khan, a valiant warrior and a relative by his wife's side. The well-equipped army consisted of three thousand horse and ten thousand foot and archers armed with shields.³ The runaway Pathan chief of Chittagong joined the expeditionary forces. Next the Pathan mercenaries in the Tripura army joined the invading forces. At the sight of the mere approach of the Pathan army, the left or southern command of the Tripura army garrisoning Chittagong took to flight. Mamarak Khan occupied Chittagong probably facing little resistance from the side of the Tripura^{s.4}

Who was the king of Gaud (Gaudeswar) that sent expedition to occupy Chittagong ? The *Rajamala* does mention neither his name

¹ ভঙ্গ দিরা গেল পাঠান গোড়েশ্বর স্থানি। — Ibid.

² ক্রোধে গোড়েশ্বর সৈন্য বহু দিল রণে॥
চাটিগ্রামে চলিলেক সৈন্য সেনাগণ।
চলি আইসে বহু সৈন্য করিরা গজ্ঞান॥ — Ibid.

³ তিন সহস্র অশ্ব চলে তাহার সজ্জাতি।
দশ সহস্র চালি চলে ধানুকী পদাতি॥
দুরন্ত পাঠান জাতি ক্রোধে অহংকারী।
চলিয়াছে চাটিগ্রামে পাঠান সঙ্গে করি॥ — Ibid.

⁴ মমারক খাঁ সৈন্য সমে চাটিগ্রামে গেল।
ভঙ্গ দিল ত্রিপুরা সৈন্য মগলে জ্বিলিল॥

... ..
বাম বাজ, সৈন্য পলায় পাঠানের ভয়।
শোয়ার নাহিক দেখি ত্রিপুরের সেনা।
পাঠানে লইল আসি চাটিগ্রাম থানা॥

nor the date of his successful military operation. Dr. A Rahim rightly takes him to be Muhammad Khan Sur.¹ The command, on the authority of the *Rajamala*, was assigned jointly to Mamarak Khan and the unnamed deposed Pathan governor of Chittagong. With a strong army they overran Chittagong and subdued almost the whole of it. Muhammad Khan ordered his generals to proceed farther south into Arakan. The generals, in obedience to the king's command carried their victorious banner into Arakan and forced the Arakanese king to submit to the authority of the Bengal sultan. To commemorate his victory over Arakan, Muhammad Khan Sur ordered the striking of coins in 962 A H² (1555 A D) styling himself Shamsuddin Muhammad Shah Ghazi.

The motive behind Muhammad Shah's decision to conquer Arakan has recently been a subject of conjecture. Arakan like Tripura claimed to be the master of Chittagong. After routing the Tripuras, Muhammad Shah would naturally turn to the Arakanese to remove them from the political scene of Chittagong. This thought might have inspired him to lead his victorious army as far south as Arakan. But how far he proceeded is not known. Probably, he did not proceed upto their capital. If the capital of Arakan were occupied by him, then he would give orders that the minting of coins should be done in Mrohaung (or Myouk U), capital of Arakan. Whether he appointed a Pathan governor in Arakan or he could make any appreciable change in Arakanese government is not known. Probably, he was satisfied only with the submission of the Arakanese king to him. Perhaps, the Pathans conquered the principality of Ramu and some portion of the modern Akyab Division. Ramu at that time formed a part of Arakan proper. Probably, under these considerations the mint of the coins is mentioned as Arakan (أركان).

¹ J A S B, XVIII (1952), 27

² Wright, I M C, II, 229; Rodgers, I M C, I, 8908, p. 150; Lanepoole, *Catalogue of Indian Coins*, p. 56

Dr A B M Habibullah expresses doubt regarding the accuracy of the reading of the legend in the coin and alleged reference to the conquest of Arakan by Shamsuddin Muhammad Shah Ghazi. He argues: "The marginal legends was read as zarb Arkan but it is clearly rikab. What has been read as A of Arakan is obviously the dot of B of zarb and the supposed dot of N appears below what should be read as B of rikab. Besides, the Muslims never used the anglicised term Arakan."¹ He continues, "R D Banerji's statement² not only conflicts with the known facts respecting Bengal's holds in the south east at this period but is exclusively based on a clearly wrong reading by Wright of a mint name on one of Muhammad's coins". Dr Habibullah's view has been challenged by N B Sanyal,³ who has put arguments in defending the correctness of the earlier reading of the coin and Muhammad Shah's conquest of Arakan. Mr Sanyal points out that the afore-said coin was not the only specimen of Muhammad Shah's Arakan coins. The coins preserved in the British Museum also indicate the same reading. "The accuracy of the reading, confirmed by eminent numismatists like Lanepoole, Rodgers and Wright, can thus be questioned with little reason." Secondly, by "the known facts", Dr Habibullah seems to say that it was impossible for a weak Bengal king to conquer a powerful country like Arakan of that time. But the political condition of Arakan and Bengal does not justify the statement of Dr Habibullah. It is true that Min Bin was a powerful monarch, but he was succeeded in 1553 A D by Dik Kha, a usurper whose reign was marked by misrule, and it lasted only for two years (1553-1554 A D). It is to be noticed that DiK Kha assumed no Muslim title as his predecessor had done as a token of his claim of sovereignty over Chittagong. This reasonably points out Dik Kha's loss of Chittagong. Mr

¹ J R A S B, Letters, XI (1945), 36

² R D Banerji, *op. cit.*, p. 278

³ J A S L, XVII (1951), 11

Sanyal rightly thinks that the victorious campaign of Muhammad Shah made an end to his rule. On the other hand, Muhammad Shah Sur was a very sagacious and ambitious monarch, who soon after the death of Islam Shah (1553 A D) launched on a career of conquest, Chittagong and Arakan probably became his first target. We have also seen how a powerful monarch like Bijoymanikya was harassed by repeated Afghan attacks. Lastly, the view of Dr Habibullah that, 'the Muslims never used the anglicised term Arakan' demand a scrutiny. It is true that in Persian source books the name is written as Arkhank and its slight variations. It might be that the term **رکاب** either as Europeanized form or as a pluralized form of the Arabic term **دک** (pillar) was more familiar to the mint master than other forms of name of the country and in this form he probably engraved the word as mint name. Therefore, the fact that Muhammad Shah conquered Arakan or at least a part of it, cannot be seriously disputed.

Strangely, the conquest of Arakan by Sultan Muhammad Shah has completely been ignored by the *Arakanese Chronicle*. The *Tripura Chronicle* refers to the Chittagong campaign of the sultan of Gaud but not the conquest of Arakan. The defeat of the Tripura army by Muhammad Khan distressed but not dispirited King Bijoymanikya. He ordered a reinforcement for the war front. At that time, the Tripura army was divided into two wings (bazu).¹ While the right wing (dakshin bazu) under the command of Kala Nazir attaining success in Sylhet, the left wing (bam bazu) was retreating from the action in Chittagong. The reinforced army achieved nothing against the Pathans and for long eight months they unsuccessfully laid siege to the fort of Chittagong.² This

¹ The name bazu is a Persian word pronouncing the same and meaning 'an arm', 'a wing'.

² আট মাস যুদ্ধ করে পাঠানের সেনা
লইতে না পারলে গড় চাউগ্রাম স্থানে।।

failure had only incurred wrath of the king who condemned his generals in a very humiliating manner for their cowardice.¹ The king then summoned Kala Nazir, his veteran general and the head of the Jaintiya expedition, and ordered him to lead the offensive operation against the Pathans of Chittagong. He conferred on the general the dignity of being his adopted son.² The army of Kala Nazir, after arriving at Chittagong, formed the front line of attack, the previous left wing remaining in the rear. Kala Nazir started the charge on the Pathan army in the morning. There followed a severe fighting with heavy bloodshed on both sides. In the late afternoon, Kala Nazir, the valiant general suddenly found himself surrounded by the Pathan soldiers. The cowardly Tripura soldiers did not come to the aid of their commander. Kala Nazir fell fighting bravely. The Pathans won the day and retired to their own fort to take rest for the night.³

After their failure in the see-saw battle, the Tripuras resorted to a secret method. They dug a subterranean passage beneath the wall of the enemy fort and an army, three thousand strong, frightened the unprepared Pathan troops at dead of night. The Pathan troops, being overpowered by this sudden attack, were thrown into disorder. The besieged troops tried to escape, but most of them were caught and put to the sword.⁴ Mamarak Khan (?)

1 *Ibid.*

2 *Ibid.*

3 বন্ধ জয় হৈল বলি পাঠান দ্বারী।

শ্রান্ত হৈয়া গেল তারা গড়ের ভিতর।।

—*Ibid.*, p, 48

A close study of the narration in the *Rajamala* suggests that the Pathan occupied territory was chiefly centred on the town of Chittagong. Though the Pathan garrison successfully defended their position in the town, no Pathan vigilant army was posted on the way to Chittagong to prevent the Tripura army from making inroad into Chittagong.

4 তিনি সহস্র হিন্দুরগণ খড়্গ চর্ম লৈয়া।

কাটয়ে পাঠান সৈন্য কোঠে প্রবেশিয়া।।

—*Ibid.*

Mobarak Khan) with his mother tried to escape by scaling the wall but soon he was found out and "taken prisoner and confined in iron cage and at the instigation of the head Brahmin priest, was sacrificed to the fourteen gods".¹ The Tripuras thus won the war by a fraudulent means. They then plundered the fort and gained five hundred gold balls each one weighing one seer. The elephants, horses and the bullion thus acquired were sent to the capital as booty; the rest was divided among the plundering troops. A Tripura governor was posted in Chittagong after its conquest.²

Unfortunately, the *Tripura Chronicle* does not mention the date of the battle. Dr A Rahim puts the date between 1554 A D, the year of Muhammad Khan's Arakan coin and 1559 A D, the year of Bijoymanikya's Lakshya coin, which commemorates his completion of the conquest of the Trans Meghna region. It has already been observed that the conquest of Arakan by Muhammad Khan was followed by a prolonged war with Bijoymanikya for about a year. It seems that the Tripura King could not conquer Chittagong before the death of Muhammad Khan in December, 1555 A D. Probably, Chittagong was annexed by the Tripura king to his kingdom in the early part of the year 1556 A D.

Chittagong remained under almost a continuous Tripura occupation for more than a decade (? 1556-? 1566 A D). In the history of Arakan, we see that Min Bin's strong rule was successively followed by weak rules of Dik Kha (1553-1555 A D), Tsau Iha (1555-1564 A D) and Meng Tsek ya (1564-1571 A D). None of these Arakanese kings could claim authority over Chittagong, and therefore, they felt no necessity of taking Muslim names. Death removed the strong rule¹ of Muhammad Khan Sur in 1555 A D and soon Bengal met with perilous days that threw it into one of the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51: also J A S B, XIX (1850), 546

² ঝানাদার চট্টগ্রামে গড়েতে রাখিয়া।

পাঠানের যত দ্বা সবল লুণ্ঠিয়া।।

darkest periods of its history. Ghiyasuddin Bahadur Shah, son and successor of Muhammad Shah was too busy in his northern Indian affairs to devote his attention to Chittagong. His rule came to an end in 1560 A D and his brother Ghiyasuddin Jalal Shah ascended the throne in the same year. He ruled only for three years and he was succeeded by his son in 1563 A D. The reigning king was murdered in the same year by an upstart who ascended the throne of Bengal styling himself as Ghiyasuddin. He was killed next year, and the throne was occupied by Taj Khan Karrani in 1564 A D. His reign came to an end in the next year (1565 A D) and his brother Suleiman succeeded to the throne. In fact, the Pathan rule in Bengal from 1556 to 1565 A D was marked by fratricidal wars, frequent changes on the throne and the consequent misrule which greatly impaired the strength of the Bengal sultanate. Moreover, the restored Mughal empire under Akbar was looming large in the western horizon which needed constant watch from the Bengal sultans. These circumstances, gave Bijoymanikya a freehand over Chittagong.

The accession of Suleiman Karrani marked a new epoch in the history of Bengal. He was an able ruler, and restored the lost prestige of the Bengal sultanate to a great extent.

Recently an inscription,¹ fixed on the wall of an old mosque in the village Ilsha in the Banskhalī u. z. has been published by Dr Abdul Karim. He, after a great deal of difficulty owing to its worn out condition, succeeded in reading the name Sultan Suleiman to whose reign the building of a mosque in the holy month of Ramzan 975 A H or 1568 A D is attributed. Though our scholar is not fully satisfied with the reading of the whole of the inscription, the name of the sultan in the third line of the inscription is ver clear. No evidence is available to prove when and how Chittagong passed on to the Pathan rule from that of the Tripuras. However, the Pathan occupation of Chittagong is confirmed by the account of Caesar Frederick, the notable Venetian traveller

¹ J A S P, IX (1964), 30

visiting Sandwip and Chittagong in or around 1569 A D. He writes "Sondiva belonged to the kingdom of Bengala.....The people are Moores, and the king a very good man of a Moore king ... they had the people of Chatigan were both subjects to one king."¹

Thus Caesar Frederick's account leaves no doubt that Chittagong along with Sandwip was under the Bengal sultans at the time of his visit. It seems that the Pathans snatched Chittagong from the Tripuras some time before 1568 A D, probably in 1567 A D.

Bijoymanikya died without a male heir and in 1494 Saka (1572-73 A D) the throne was usurped by Udayamanikya. In 1573 A D, Daud Karrani ascended the throne of Bengal. Being an extraordinary ambitious monarch he wanted to bring Chittagong under more effective control of Gaud. Accordingly, he dispatched a body of troops² possibly to strengthen the Pathan forces already holding possession of Chittagong. The king of Tripura with a view to

¹ Purchas, X, 137

² গোড়েশ্বর শরনে বিজয়মানিকা মরণ।

...

চাউগ মে পাঠাইল সৈন্য মহতেজা।।

—*Rajamala*, II, 69

The *Rajamala* states that the Gaud sultan sent troops to Chittagong after the death news of Bijoymanikya had reached the capital. This suggests that so long Bijoymanikya was alive, the Gaud sultans made no attempt to reoccupy Chittagong. Nevertheless, the mosque inscription (1568) and the accounts of Caesar Frederick (1569) suggest that Chittagong should be under the Afghan rule before the death of Bijoymanikya. An opinion may be formed in this connection that Chittagong at least its central portion was brought under the Pathan control by a body of Pathan troops during the closing years of Bijoymanikya's reign. From that time upto the time of the sending of expedition by the Gaud sultan the Pathan possession of Chittagong was more or less a self governing unit.

intercepting the Pathan army on their way to Chittagong, sent a large contingent consisting of 52,000 soldiers and 3000 generals under the command of Ranaghan Narayan. Ranaghan was so impudent that he assured his king of an easy victory over the Pathans. He mobilized his forces on the route to Chittagong,¹ and ignoring his generals' advice on the strategy of attack, he proposed a night assault on the Pathan army. And actually "they did during the night, notwithstanding the unfavourable omens of the flapping of the vulture's wings, falling of fire from the sky and the barking of foxes".² The battle raged loud and fierce and soon the Tripuras found themselves besieged by the Pathans and their fort was stormed by the victorious enemy. In the terrible carnage that followed the Tripuras, according to the estimate of their own chronicler, lost about 40,000 souls and the casualties on the Pathan side were 5000.³ The victorious Pathan forces, then entered the fort of Chittagong⁴ to occupy it. This victory over the Tripuras caused much rejoings in Gaud, and the gratified sultan sent more troops under the joint command of Firuz Khan Anni and Jamal Khan Panni to strengthen the base at Chittagong.⁵ The army of the 'Twelve Bangalas' also followed them.⁶

¹ চাট্টগ্রামে বাইব হেন বদ্বিরা লক্ষণ।

... ...
চট্টলের পথে রাখে সৈন্য হস্তী ঘোড়া।।

—*Ibid.*, p, 70

² 'Rajamala,' trans. Rev. Long, J A S B, XIX (1850), 547

³ পঞ্চ সহস্র পাঠান পড়িল সেই রণে।

চলিল হাজার পড়ে দিগ্‌পুরার গণে।।

—*Rajamala*, II, 71

⁴ রণে ভঙ্গ দিগ্‌পুর সেনা রাজ্যেত তৎপর।

চট্টলের গড়ে গেল পাঠান সত্তর।।

—*Ibid.*

⁵ পীরোজ খাঁ জামি আর জামাল খাঁ পনি।

চট্টলে পাঠাইল গোড়ে তারা যোদ্ধা জানি।।

—*Ibid.*

⁶ দ্বাদশ বাঙ্গালা দিল তাহার সহিত।

—*Ibid.*

'Twelve Bangalas' probably mean the chieftains of Bengal, popularly known as Bara Bhunyas.

In spite of their suffering repeated reverses in the hands of the Pathans, the Tripuras decided to continue the war at any cost, The war that followed lasted for five years¹ (? 1575-? 1580 A D). The command of the Tripura army was assigned to Prince Amaramanikya, along with Bhima another general. The Pathans on the other hand were led by Jamal Khan Panni. This unusually long period of war may be viewed more as sporadic Tripura attacks on the Pathan held territories of Chittagong than a regular war. This long drawn war was extremely disastrous for the Tripuras. "At this period numbers died from famine and from disease the result of it".²

The reign of Daud Karrani, the last Pathan sultan of Bengal terminated in 1576 A D and Udayamanikya the Tripura king was carried off in 1498 Saka or 1576/77 A D. But the expulsion of Daud Karrani and the death of Udayamanikya did not put an end to the Pathan Tripura rivalry over Chittagong. Jamal Khan Panni, the Pathan chief of Chittagong maintained a precarious Pathan hold on Chittagong in the face of Tripura attacks from the north and the Arakanese incursions from the south. According to the *Rajamala* the Pathan rule in Chittagong protracted its existence for five years (? 1575-? 1580 A D). The accounts of Ralph Fitch (1583 A D) bear witness to the long drawn war between the Tripuras and the Arakanese for the supremacy over Chittagong. It seems that the Tripuras succeeded in holding the possession of Chittagong for sometime before it finally passed to the Arakanese. The Pathan garrisoning forces of Chittagong, disconnected from the central control and weakened by the continued military operations of the Tripura forces, could not maintain long its precarious existence. The end of the Pathan rule in Gaud gave the Tripura king an opportunity of occupying Chittagong. It was not a hard task for King Amaramanikya to overpower the Pathan garrisoning forces, already decimated by the prolonged wars. This followed the

¹ গুপ্ত বংশের যুদ্ধ ছিল জামাল পানি সেনের।

— Ibid.

² J A S B, XIX (1850), 547

Tripura occupation of Chittagong. The disbanded Pathan soldiers could not return to Gaud as it had fell in the hands of the Mughals their enemies. The *Rajamala* gives evidence of the employment of the Pathan soldiers in the Tripura army. The remaining Pathans abandoned their arms and allowed themselves to be absorbed among the civilian population in the district and elsewhere.

The Afghan rule in Chittagong, though marked by wars and turmoils was in no sense a passing shadow. It has left its impressions on ethnology, placenames, religious edifices and revenue administration of the district. A large number of people claim themselves to be the Pathans by descent.¹ In his work named *Laili Majnu*, poet Daulat Wazir Bahram Khan states that his ancestor, Hamid Khan, a soldier by profession, settled in Chittagong. From the colophon of a poem named *Vidya Sundara* it is known that the author Sabirid Khan (Shah Barid Khan) was a born Pathan. The *Pathan Prasamsa* of Nawazish Khan did exalt some Pathan families in Satkania u. z.

The Pathan adventurers, warriors, fortunehunters, who came to Chittagong after its conquest, did not return to upcountry after the breakdown of the Pathan power. The Mughals, the successors of the Pathans in the subcontinent were their arch enemies. Therefore, they preferred to remain in Chittagong rather than face the risk of being killed or enslaved by the Mughals. With the conquest of Gaud by the Mughals many more Pathans took refuge in the district. They offered their services to whoever held the possession of the district. The Arakanese, required their services in fighting out the enemies, the Mughals, and the Portuguese, all of whom were the enemies of the Pathans. Due to their martial vigour, they were appointed to responsible posts such as roaza, khnoaza, both meaning headmen. One such roaza was Aziz Khan, brother of Musa Khan who constructed the mosque of Hulain in 1658 A D. The Khans of Dohazari in the Patiya u. z. claim them

¹ O' Malley. *op. cit.*, p. 53

selves to be of the Pathan origin. It is said that one of their ancestors held the hazari mansab under the Mughal rule.

Some of the placenames of Chittagong provide evidences of the Pathan settlement in the district. The Pathantooly in the city, was once the residential area of the Pathans.¹ The rent roll of Todar Mall mentions a mahal named Suleimanpur (popularly called Shakpura) which probably commemorates the rule of Suleiman Karrani over the district.

¹ Qanungo, *op. cit.*, p. 320

CHAPTER IX

ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE SULTANATE

The materials for a proper study of the administrative institutions and functioning of government in Chittagong under the sultanate are so scanty that it is practically impossible for us to have a comprehensive view. So, what we can do here is no better than piecing together the information available from here and there.

According to Shihabuddin Talish, Sultan Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah conquered Chittagong and annexed it to the independent sultanate of Sonargaon. Though Fakhruddin laid the foundation of Muslim rule in Chittagong, his conquest was in no sense final. Chittagong is situated far away from Gaud and it is surrounded by some hostile non-Muslim countries like Tripura and Arakan which also aspired to take possession of the district. They would not allow an uninterrupted Muslim rule in Chittagong. The district had to be conquered time and again by the sultans of the Ilyas Shahi and the Husain Shahi dynasties and the whole Afghan period is but a period of war between the Tripuras, Afghans and Arakanese for the supremacy over the district. In fact, the wars between these countries virtually turned the district to "the cockpit of medieval Bengal". The weak rule at the centre, the great distance from the capital, and aggressions of the neighbouring countries were some of the factors that led Chittagong frequently to slip out of the Gaudian grip. These circumstances made the establishment of a regular and stable government almost impossible in the district.

As a matter of fact no clear picture about the local administration of the Muslim sultans of Bengal is available. What

is known is that under the sultanate period the kingdom was divided into iqlim, 'arsha, thana, khitta, qasbah and shahr for administrative purposes.¹ What was the precise position of Chittagong vis-a-vis the central administration after its annexation to the kingdom of Bengal is not known. Under Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah and Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah, Chittagong was a mint town and in their coins the district was styled as 'arsha.² The official designation of the governor of 'arsha Chatgaon is not known. It is difficult to say how long 'arsha Chatgaon continued to serve as the administrative name of Chittagong. From this time up to the end of Husain Shahi dynasty the position is not distinct. We have only the names of a few officers in inscriptions and in literary works, whose exact ranks could not be ascertained. The first of these officers is Rasti Khan who is called Majlis i-Ala in a local mosque inscription. It may be assumed that he was in charge of the occupied region under the later Ilyas Shahi rulers. Next the names of Paragal Khan and Chhuti Khan are available. In the two *Mahabharatas* (Paragal and Chhuti Khani) they are described as Lashkar (or Sar-i-Lashkar) and Lashkar Khwaja which indicate their high status in the civil as well as in the military administration of the district. From such references they may be taken as thanadars or officials in charge of protection of frontier against attack. Royal titles, robes of honour, gifts etc. were conferred on them at the time of their appointment. Sultan Alauddin Husain Shah is said to have sent Wazir Hamid Khan to become an 'ad hikari' of Chittagong. It is not known what kind of official the adhikari was in the organisation of government under Independent Sultanate. The *Chaitan*; a

¹ For an elaborate and systematic discussion of different aspects of administration under the sultanate see Dr A Karim's valuable contribution entitled 'Aspects of Muslim Administration in Bengal down to A D 1538' in the *J A S P*, III (1958).

² *Corpus*, pp. 63 and 76-82; also H N Wright, *Catalogue of coins in the Indian Museum*, II, 142

Bhagavata refers to Ramchandra Khan as an *adhikari*, appointed by Sultan Husain Shah in the province of Chhatrabhog. Next we know the names of Khuda Bakhsh Khan (Codavascão) and Amirza Khan (Amirzacao) who have been variously described by the Portuguese writers as 'Mouro Grande' (Muslim noblemen), 'vassalos' (vassals) and 'governadores' (governors). During the Afghan rule in Chittagong, we hear of some district governors such as the Nogazil, Mamarak Khan, Jamal Khan Panni etc.

As the capital of the kingdom was situated far away from the district, the sultans had to depend largely on its officers for the defence of the territory and for local administration. Whatever might have been the official rank and position of these administrators, the geographical position of the district in the map of Bengal and other considerations must have allowed its officers to arrogate to themselves wide powers. As a matter of fact, the governors, sector commanders, frontier guards were all autonomous commanders. Referring to the administrative status of the later Husain Shahi governors of Chittagong, Campos remarks that 'the governors seems to have acted largely on their own'¹ It appears that the governors had some delegated power to perform a number of administrative functions. The governor would have to maintain the security of the territory, ensure the domestic peace and order, receive foreign missions and trade representatives, control import and export trade, exercise judicial authority, punish the criminals, chastise the pirates and so forth. In a word, he had to supervise all branches of public administration. During the troublous Afghan period the army officers were required to perform civil functions.

As Chittagong was a frontier province of the kingdom of Bengal so the role of military organization in protecting the district from its aggressive neighbours can hardly be exaggerated. The district could be retained only by constant war with the Tripuras, the Arakanese, the hill tribes and the European pirates.

¹ Campos, *op. cit.*, 30n

Therefore, it can be assumed that the governors of the district would have to be able commanders as well as civil administrators. In connection with the narration of local administration under the sultanate, Dr Abdul Karim aptly remarks ; "The civil officers were also heads of the army The military character was therefore a fundamental fact of Muslim administration in Bengal.¹

To guard the district from hostile neighbours and to keep the port town protected from the plunder of the pirates, an army had to be permanently stationed at the district headquarters. The existence of a fort at Chittagong during the Pathan rule is evident from the *Ain-i-Akbari* and the *Tripura Chronicle*. The strength of the fort is ascertained from the fact that on one occasion in spite of their persistent attempt to occupy the fort of Chittagong, the Tripuras, could not storm the fort which was being garrisoned by the Pathan troops. The total strength of the garrisoning cavalry and infantry mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari*² should not be taken in its literal sense. No other period of history of the district is so much full of wars, obviously the result of disputed sovereignty. Not a year passed without war with the neighbouring countries. So the figure of the garrisoning troops supplied by the *Ain* does not indicate the actual state of things.

The territorial subdivisions of the province of Chittagong provide an ample scope for speculation. Whether the 'arsha Chatgaon under Ilyas Shahi dynasts was subdivided into smaller areas for administrative purposes is difficult to say. Even if such small administrative subdivisions ever existed, their number, name, and location are equally unknown to us. It can, however, be said with a degree of certainty that the territorial possession in Chittagong was steadily shrinking during the restored Ilyas Shahi regime,

¹ J A S P, III (1958), 93

¹ The *Ain* states that the garrisoning troops consisted of one hundred horse and fifteen hundred foot. (Vide *Ain*, II, 152)

Even the mighty arms of Sultan Ruknuddin Barbak Shah could not establish the authority of Gaud over the whole of Chittagong. The possessions of Gaud sultans in Chittagong were growing smaller and smaller and at last reduced to a small unit during the Abyssinian period. Rasti Khan and his descendants were exercising functions of government over this small unit comprising the northern part of the district, probably not depending much on central aid. Sultan Husain Shah fully conquered Chittagong by driving out the Tripuras from northern Chittagong and the Arakanese from southern Chittagong. He commissioned a number of administrative officers to keep the district in tight grip. The accounts of the foreigners and some facts concerning the political condition available in contemporary Bengali works make it possible to speak about the administrative units into which the territory under jurisdiction of the Husain Shahi rulers was subdivided and the officers to whom these were assigned.

The MS copy of the *Rajamala* mentions six shiqs and specifically names Rambu (Ramu) as one of these shiqs which were occupied by Dhanyamanikya during his Chittagong campaign in 1513 A.D.¹ The *Rajamala* mentions six rajyas² (kingdoms or principalities) including that of Ramu as late as Amaramanikya's reign. The accounts of the Portuguese writers along with their maps (especially De Barros') show only two sectors into which the district along with Hill Chittagong was divided; the northern sector named 'Estado de Amirzacao' (kingdom of Amirza Khan) and the southern sector named 'Estado de Codavascas' (kingdom of Khuda Bakhsh Khan). The Karnaphuli divided their territorial jurisdiction. The Portuguese historians say that both of them were the "Moorish Vassals" under the Gaud king. As Chittagong was the headquarters of the province so it can reasonably be conjectured that the administration of the occupied region including the port town might have been

¹ See *supra*, p. 159

² See *infra*, ch xi, sec 2

assigned to Amirza Khan by the sultan. But the actual state of things tell a different story. Both of these officers engaged themselves in internecine war. Amirza Khan, though faced discomfiture on several occasions could not be driven out from his headquarters. Throughout the period, Khuda Bakhsh Khan, as he appears in the Portuguese chronicles, behaved like a semi-independent ruler who did pay homage neither to the governor of Chittagong nor to any other sovereign. But there is no evidence helping to prove that he raised the banner of rebellion against the sultan of Gaud. On the otherhand, the Portuguese historians, categorically tell about his subordination to the sultan of Gaud. The map of De Barros ascribes to him a large tract of land comprising southern Chittagong and Hill Chittagong and even a part of modern Arakan. Backed by such a big territory and human resource he could not only defy the authority of the governor of Chittagong but even plunge into a war of supremacy against him. It seems that the cities of 'Codavascam' and 'Sore' might jointly or severally be his centres of administration.

The Portuguese historians did not mention any other governor of the district during the Husain Shahi rule, though De Barros' map locates Chacoma in the interior of Chittagong Hill Tracts, within the boundary of the state of Khuda Bakhsh Khan. But no Portuguese historian narrates anything noteworthy event with respect to this people.

The Bengali works give evidence of some other officers along with their territorial assignments. The *Paragali Mahabharata* and the *Chhuti Khani Mahabharata* mention Paragal Khan as son and Chhuti Khan as grandson of Rasti Khan who ruled his territory with the help of his son and grandson.¹ The Muhammad Khani pedigree ascribes the overlordship of Chittagong to Rasti Khan (Chatigram Deshapati). If Deshapati Rasti Khan of literary sources and Masnad-i-Ala Rasti Khan of the epigraphic sources are

¹ See *supra*, p. 154

identical then it can be safely said that his headquarters was situated somewhere in northern Chittagong. The weak rule of the Bengal sultans and the great distance from the capital gave Rasti Khan an opportunity of acting independent ruler. Sultan Husain Shah after reconquering Chittagong appointed Paragal Khan, son of Rasti Khan, a governor of northern Chittagong, comprising modern Mirsarai, Fatikchhari, and Ramgarh, bordering the kingdom of Tripura. Chhuti Khan succeeded Paragal Khan in the same post. From the poem *Laili Majnu* by Daulat Wazir Bahram Khan we have been informed that Sultan Husain Shah appointed another officer named Hamid Khan an *adhikari* (governor) of Chittagong. But the poet does not make any reference to the time and place of assignment. Dr Abdul Karim names his assigned place as modern Sitakunda u. z.¹ Whatever eulogistic titles might have been attributed to Paragal Khan, Chhuti Khan and Hamid Khan by the Bengalee poets it appears that they were officers not higher than either thanadars or shiqdars or fauzdars and possibly held the posts inferior and subservient to the governor of the province of Chittagong. They did not show such refractoriness to the governor of Chittagong as Khuda Bakhsh Khan had done to Amirza Khan, governor of the province of Chittagong. The above discussion may help us to form an opinion that neither the administrative posts were of same rank and position nor the territorial jurisdiction of the officers were equal in size. As a wise war strategist Sultan Husain Shah was fully aware of the geographical position of Chittagong, which was then surrounded by some hostile kingdoms. These considerations forced him to appoint a number of officers in Chittagong. Paragal Khan and his successor Chhuti Khan were entrusted by the Husain Shahi sultans with the task of keeping the Tripuras in check. Khuda Bakhsh Khan might have given the charge of dealing with the Arakanese in the south. Hamid Khan was probably commissioned with the task of dealing with the tribesmen of Chittagong Hill Tracts. The governorship of the whole of Chittagong including the port town was assigned to Amirza Khan.

¹ J A S P, XII (1967), 330-331.

This reorganization of administrative set up worked well till the closing years of the rule of the Husain Shahi dynasty. But the repeated Afghan attacks on Bengal and the temporary Mughal occupation of Gaud put everything in utter confusion resulting in the slackness of central control over Chittagong. These circumstances gave the subordinate officers especially Khuda Bakhsh Khan an opportunity of defying the authority of the governor of the province of Chittagong.

No clear idea regarding the Pathan administrative system in Chittagong especially during the early Afghan rule is available. It is generally acknowledged by the scholars that Todar Mall's account of revenue particularly relating to the unconquered areas is based on the previous Pathan documents.¹ Of the seven mahals five are territorial. These are Talagaon (var. Malgaon), Chatgaon, Deogaon, Suleimanpur (commonly Sheikhpur) and Nawapara. The other two mahals, namely Sair (dues from salt pits) and Sehwa were the revenue yielding imposts. Whether the five mahals covered all the Pathan occupied territories of the district cannot be said with certainty. The city of Chittagong along with its adjoining area was included in Chatgaon, the largest of the mahals. This mahal was bordered on the south by Deogaon (Devagram or Diang) which might roughly incorporate the whole littoral area from the mouth of the Karnaphuli as far south as Banskhalī u. z. Sulaimanpur or Sheikhpur might roughly correspond with

¹ Todar Mall's account of revenue of Bengal might have been copied from the revenue documents of the Karrani rulers. As the latter had no control over southern Chittagong which they lost to the Arakanese, so the southern Chittagong has not been entered in the rent roll. Similarly, as the north eastern portion of north Chittagong was being held by the Tripura rulers, so this area has perhaps been excluded from the rent roll. Most probably, the Karrani rulers' actual holding comprised the area between Sitakunda and Banskhalī.

modern Shakpura, a large and populous village in modern Boalkhali u. z. If our identification is correct then Sulaimanpur or Sheikhpur comprised the major portions of modern Boalkhali and Patiya u. z.'s. This mahal yielded double the amount paid by Deogaon mahal, which comprised a large portion of modern Anwara u. z. and some portions of Patiya and Boalkhali u. z.'s. Modern Noapara village in Roazan u. z. is the surviving trace of Nawapara mahal which might comprise the riparian tracts of the Halda in its lower course bordering hill ranges on the east. To ascertain the location of the remaining mahal namely Talagaon or Malgaon is extremely difficult. It can be identified with either Tarragurah Pargana¹ of the Mughal revenue document or Talanagar, a big mauza in Baraiardhala Union in north Chittagong. The available sources do not help us much to locate either Talagaon mahal or Tarragurah pargana correctly in modern map. While the area, south of the river Karnaphuli was included under Deogaon and Sulaimanpur (alias Sheikhpur) the portion of the district north of Chatgaon may be assigned to Talagaon mahal. Probably, it comprised a substantial portion of the zamindari of Nizampur in the subsequent Arakanese regime. However, final judgement rests with the future historians.

Apart from governors and other high ranking officers in the civil and military administration of the district, there were officers of inferior ranks. These officers were appointed to look after specific departments of administration. For example, during the reign of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah there were karkuns to look after the Hajj pilgrims.² The Portuguese historians' accounts indicate the existence of a customs-house and the customs officers at the port of Chittagong under the Husain Shahi dynasty.³ The Guazil

¹ Fifth Report, II, 248

² See *supra*, p. 139.

³ See *infra*, ch x.

(Qazi)¹ was entrusted with various civil duties apart from judicial administration. But the references to these officials are so few and far between that it is not permissible to form a comprehensive view about the working of the administration in the district.

A few records here and there throw light on the revenue collection in Chittagong during the pre Mughal Muslim period. As the chief port of the kingdom, Chittagong used to send large returns of customs duties to the central exchequer.

The sarkar of Chatgaon under the Afghan rule was divided into seven mahals yielding a sum of 11,424, 310 dams (roughly Rs 2,85,607) as revenue.² In 1582 A D when Todar Mall was preparing his rent roll Chittagong had just passed over to the Arakanese from the Pathans. So the information gathered by Todar Mall obviously based on the earlier Pathan revenue settlement. Of the seven mahals into which the sarkar was divided, five were territorial and the remaining two comprised different items of revenue. Of these items of revenue sair duties were collected chiefly from the salt pits. During the Pathan and even the earlier regimes, Chittagong and Sandwip were said to be important salt producing centres in the province. The other type of revenue viz, the sahwa has not been defined satisfactorily so far. It can be assumed that a great portion of the revenue was spent for the maintenance of the army stationed in the headquarters.

¹ See *Infra*, ch x. This is the Portuguese corruption of Qazi, the judicial officer who besides his official duties has to perform some executive functions (vide *H J*, p. 177); cf. al guazil, spanish warrant officer.

² *Aln.*, II, 152

CHAPTER X

PORTUGUESE ACTIVITIES IN CHITTAGONG : PART I (1516-1580)

To the medieval Europeans, India was a fabulous land of gold, spices and muslin; but few Europeans till that time had ever seen the land from where they obtained these commodities. Toward the close of the fifteenth century, the Portuguese with the help of the Arab merchants were able to discover the sea route to India and in the early part of the next century they could open trade relation with Chittagong. No other European nation at that time was more adventurous than these people of a tiny kingdom in the south west corner of Europe to whom the sea seems to be the only element. Unfortunately, most part of their activities in Chittagong are darkened by events of pillage and devastation.

The chief source of the history of the Portuguese activities in Chittagong is the writings of the Portuguese historians. "The first Portugalle which drunke of the river Ganges", as far as Antonio Galvam knows, "was a knight called Joao Coelho",¹ "Having been sent to the king of Bengal by Fernando Peres de Andrada (chief captain of fleet)",² he arrived at Chittagong in a 'Moorish vess-l' (of Gromelle or Ghulam Ali, a merchant of extensive overseas trade). He was cordially received by the governor of Chittagong. "The governor was well disposed towards Coelho, as the Moors who

¹ Antonio Galvam, "The Discoveries of the world", Hakluyt society, p. 131; qt, J A S B, XVIII (1922), 41; Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 1

² Danvers, *op. cit.*, I, 341; De Barros qt, C R (Jan.March), 1938, p. 23; Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 27

had come from Pacem along with him ... gave favourable reports about Coelho to the governor".¹ Joao Coelho stayed in the court with full ambassadorial dignity.

In 1518 A D, another Portuguese commander named Dom Joao de Silveira was sent to Bengal by Lopo Soares de Albergaria, governor of Goa. On the high seas he met with two trading vessels on their way from Bengal to Guzrat. These two ships belonged to Ghulam Ali, a relation to the governor of Chittagong.² Silveira instantly made prizes of them and diverted them to Cochin. "Next he sailed for Bengal with four ships, one of which he commanded in person, while the remaining three had for their captains Tristao Barbudo, Joao Fidalgo and Joao Moreno".³ "Silveira took over in his own ship the pilot of the captured ships and his nephew"⁴ and pressed them to his service as he had got no sufficient knowledge of shipping in this part of the Bay. The pilot and his nephew had no other alternative but to obey the pirate. The expedition "arrived in due course at the mouth of the Arakan river".⁵ "They were well received by the people of Arakan who sought their friendship and amity."⁶ But the youth of the captured ships "counselled the Portuguese commander not to have anything to do with the Arakanese as there was no good feeling between Arakan and Bengal".⁷ Silveira next sailed to Chittagong. On his arrival at the port, Silveira "sent with a messenger his compliments to the king of Bengal asking in the

¹ Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 29

² De Barros, *qt C R* (Jan.-March, 1938), p. 22

³ *Ibid.*, p. 23

⁴ Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 28

⁵ De Barros, *qt C R* (Jan. March, 1938), p. 22

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

name of the king of Portugal for facilities of trade and for permission to erect a factory where the Portuguese merchants could rest during their voyages and exchange goods with other parts of India"¹ In the meantime, the captive pilot and his nephew, after their disembarkation, reported to the governor of Chittagong all that had happened. This greatly enraged the governor and the attendants at his court no doubt, but the governor restrained himself from doing any harm to the Portuguese. Moreover, he made no reprisals against Joao Coelho who "experienced nothing but kindness and courtesy"² at the court. The governor, however, reported the mischievous activities of Silveira to Coelho. He also asked him to offer his good offices to stop this sort of activity. The latter attempted a conciliation; but Silveira would not listen to the counsel of his countrymen. Moreover, he "would not allow Joao Coelho to arrange the trade matters preferring to do so himself as he was the real ambassador sent by the Portuguese Governor".³ Shortly afterwards, he made another prize of a ship full of foodgrains not far away from the port. In consequence of that, the governor took arms against the pirate. Joao Coelho tried his best to restore peace between them. But his attempts came to nothing and he sailed for China. Silveira after a fruitless stay of "five months" sailed away to Ceylon "without concluding any treaty of peace" with the governor of Chittagong.⁴ "Whilst at Bengal, Silveira received an invitation from the king of Arakan to visit that port".⁵

Thus the first attempt of the Portuguese to gain a footing in the great port ended in utter failure. All the Portuguese historians are unanimous in blaming the Bengalees for this. De Barros and

¹ Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 28

² *H B*, II, 352

³ Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 29

⁴ *C R*, (Jan.-March. 1938), p. 21

⁵ Danvers, *op. cit.*, I, 341

other Portuguese historians found a satisfactory explanation of Silveira's ill-success in the habitual treachery and innate wickedness of the Bengalee character.¹ A Portuguese nobleman named Joao de Leyma, serving in India, reported to his sovereign on December 22, 1518 A D about Silveira's failure, which, according to him, was due to the "perverse and feeble" character of the people.² To any impartial judge, Silveira's action was nothing short of piracy "Being always in desperate war with the government, traders and people" in Chittagong, he was not competent to be a leader of a trade mission. Even Mr J H Ryley had to admit that "the Portuguese could hardly have chosen a worse representative to obtain for them a footing in a new country".³

Although Silveira "failed to accomplish his object of effecting a trade with Bengal",⁴ "it became an established custom from the time of Silveira's visit to Bengal (more precisely Chittagong) to send annually to Bengal a Portuguese ship with merchandise".⁵ Unfortunately, no information about the annual visit to Chittagong from 1519 to 1525 A D by Portuguese trading vessels has come down to us. According to the Portuguese sources, in 1522-23 A D Dom Andre Anriques, the besieged Portuguese captain at Pacem "sent to Chatigam (Chittagong) for assistance".⁶ In 1526 A D Lopo Vaz de Sampaio, the Portuguese 'governor of Goa sent Ruy Pereira to Chittagong, in keeping with "the yearly custom of sending ships" with merchandise to Bengal. After his entrance in the port he found a galleot owned by a Persian

¹ H B, II, 352

² C R (Jan. March, 1938), p. 21

³ J H Ryley, *Ralph Fitch*, p. 129

⁴ Danvers, *op. cit.*, I. 341

⁵ Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 30

⁶ Danvers, *op. cit.*, I, 356

merchant named by the Portuguese as Coje Sabadin (Khwaja Shihabuddin), an intimate of the governor of Chittagong.¹ His vessel was built in the same plan as that of the Portuguese. Pereira immediately turned a corsair, plundered the ship and made a prize of it. The Portuguese historians defend Pereira's action on the ground that the ship of Khwaja Shihabuddin was designed as such only to plunder the merchantships and then ascribe the guilt to the Portuguese.² Perhaps, the craft was built after such a design only to save itself from the Portuguese pirates, roving at that time throughout the route. Piracy was not practised by the Persians and Pereira's action must be condemned on moral or other grounds.

Storm and shipwreck brought Martim Affonso de Mello Jusarte, another Portuguese sailor, with his companions to the coast of Pegu in 1528 A.D.³ They met with utmost adversity in the unknown and desolate coastland for want of food and drink. At last they found some Bengalee fishermen, whom they asked to guide them to Chittagong. The fishermen agreed to do the same. According to the Portuguese historians, "they played him (Martim Jusarte) false and took him to Chakaria",⁴ in the territory of Khuda Bakhsh Khan. The latter was then at war with his 'neighbouring chief' possibly Amirza Khan. He immediately made Jusarte and his companions captives and demanded their service in the war. He promised them that he would set them free if he won the war. The battle was fought and won but "far from keeping his promises, he (Khuda Bakhsh Khan) imprisoned them in his

¹ Coje Sabadin tinha muito favor dos governadores de Chatigam —De Barros, p. 467.

² Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 31

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

city of Sore'.¹ It is not known why the Portuguese received such a treatment at the hands of Khuda Bakhsh Khan. Campos, following De Barros, accounts for it the treachery of the governor. Probably, the governor inflicted such penalty on the Portuguese captives in order to force their compatriots to give up piratical activities.

In the meantime, two of the ships of Jusarte, which had earlier been overtaken by the storm, reached Chakaria under Duarte Mendes Vas Cencellos and Joao Coelho, probably the same person who had visited Chittagong as the first Portuguese trade agent in 1517 A.D. They tried to procure release of Jusarte in exchange of all the goods they had brought with them. But this condition did not satisfy the governor. Probably he wanted more. The captives made an unsuccessful attempt to escape, for which they were more cruelly dealt with. One of the prisoners named Ganzalo vas de Mello, a nephew of captain De Mello Jusarte, was sold to the local Brahmins, "who had made a vow that if they ever caught hold of the Portuguese, they would sacrifice to their gods the most handsome of them".² Now these Tantrik Brahmanas found in this youth "one whose cheeks, as De Barros says, the dawning flush of youth had not yet begun to appear" their desired person and sacrificed him before the deity.³

Meanwhile, a noble revenge was taken by Khwaja Shihabuddin whose ship had earlier been captured by Pereira at the port of Chittagong. He now agreed to ransom Martim Affonso de Mello Jusarte for three thousand cruzados if he got back his vessel with

¹ De Barros in his map inserts the place on the left bank of a river within the dominion of Khuda Bakhsh Khan. The place is also inserted by Van Blaeu in his map named *Theatrum orbis Terrarum*, vol. II.

² Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 32

³ *Ibid.*

all its contents. The arrangement was done accordingly. De Mello Jusarte was set at liberty in 1529 A D and returned to Goa with Khwaja Shukrullah (Coje Sukurulla of the Portuguese writers), cousin of Khwaja Shihabuddin.

At the beginning of the reign of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah, the relation between the sultan and the Portuguese was quite amicable. In 1533 A D Nuno da Cunha, the Portuguese governor of Goa sent an expedition consisted of five ships and two hundred men probably to help Mahmud Shah in his attempt to overcome his early difficulties¹. The expedition was placed under the command of Martim Affonso de Mello Jusarte who visited Chittagong a few years back. He was directed by the government of Goa to open diplomatic and financial negotiations with the sultan of Bengal and gain "a suitable site for a factory".² De Mello was "received well by the governor of Chittagong" and started unloading his cargo. It appears that all his past experiences were completely lost to him. He, instead of trying to win the confidence of the local authorities by fair dealing, alienated them by fraudulently smuggling his goods to avoid paying the custom duties.³ In the meantime De Mello sent Duarte de Azevedo and Nuno Fernandes Freire and eleven others to the royal court at Gaud with variety of articles as presents. But it was soon discovered that the presents were the stolen goods originally belonged to a Muslim merchant and recently plundered by a Portuguese pirate named Damiao Bernaldes.⁴

¹ Danvers, *op. cit.*, I, 422

² Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 33, Correa refers the event to the year 1533 A D; De Barros 1534 A D; Faria e Sousa 1538 A D. The date given by Correa seems to be nearly accurate.

³ H B, II, 355

⁴ Campos *op. cit.*, pp. 159-160, The Portuguese viceroy entreated Khwaja Shihabuddin to capture or else to kill the pirate when the latter would enter Chittagong. "When this pirate actually

This notorious pirate had in the past been made prisoner by Khuda Bakhsh Khan.¹ Sultan Mahmud Shah, already dissatisfied with the Portuguese piratical activities, became angry at their criminal deception. He issued orders to put immediately all the members of the mission to the sword and to imprison others. Fortunately for the Portuguese, their lives were spared owing to the timely intervention of one Alfa Khan reputed to be a hundred years old and who had some influence at the court.² The sultan, however, kept them in confinement and sent a 'guazil'³ to Chittagong to take de Mello and his companions to prison. At that time, De Mello was quarrelling with the customs authorities on his evasion of the payment of certain duties. In order to capture all the Portuguese by a trick, the guazil arranged a banquet where all the Portuguese were invited. Out of two hundred Portuguese residents of Chittagong only forty men attended the feast. All on a sudden the place of entertainment turned to a fighting scene. The merry-makers found themselves besieged by the soldiers equipped with firearms and archery. The Portuguese made desperate attempts to resist the attack with whatever arms they had in their possession. In this skirmish about ten Portuguese were killed including Christovam de Mello, the nephew of the Portuguese governor Lopo Vaz de Sampaio. Many Portuguese were wounded. Their property valued at £ 100,00 was seized by the authorities. The survivors

arrived they did him no harm immediately, believing that he would ask for pardon and give up his mode of life".

¹ Gaspar Correa, 'Lendas da India,' III, 479; qt, *H. J.*, p. 232.

² Alfa Chan homem que tinha grande autoridade ante El Ray". *De Barros*, p. 473. Blochmann identifies him with Alfa Husaini of Baghdad (*J A S B*, XLII (1873), 298n).

³ According to the authors of *H J* (p. 177), the 'guazil' is Portuguese corruption of qazi, a top ranking judicial cum executive officer under the sultanate.

were taken prisoner and thrown into a dungeon. No medical aid was given to the sick. After a few days, "they were forced to march six leagues during one whole night till they reached a place called Mava".¹ From this place, the unfortunate captives were finally taken to Gaud to share the fate of de Azevedo and his companions, "who were treated not like men but like beasts". The Portuguese historians are emphatic in denouncing indignantly the behaviour of the native people. They made the latter solely responsible for all the misfortunes suffered by their countrymen. But to an independent and impartial judge, most of their activities were too shameful to be defended and for their offending activities they were appropriately dealt with. They ruined the foreign trade of this country, committed robbery even in the territorial waters, evaded customs duties, defied the laws of the country, and even dared to take arms against the government of the country. The provincial rulers had to take strong retaliative measures to suppress their criminal conduct.

The Portuguese, however, could not be intimidated by making reprisals. On the authority of Correa, "in the year 1535 A D", Diogo Rabello, the Portuguese captain in Satgaon, "sent one of the faists with thirty men, to the other port of Chatigaon, where they found three ships from the coast of Cheromandel, which were driven away from the port." Rebello then despatched a message to the 'gozil' (guazil or qazi) informing him that "he was sent by the governor (of Goa) with choice of peace or war and that he should send to ask the king (Mahmud Shah) if he chose to liberate the (Portuguese) prisoners, in which case he also would liberate his ports and leave them in their former peace".² But it seems that the threat was not of much use.

¹ Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 35. In De Barros' map it is shown on the coast, north of Chittagong. The name and the location of the place cannot be satisfactorily identified.

² Correa, *op. cit.*, III, 649; *op. H.J.*, p. 797.

The news of the Portuguese reverses at Chittagong reached the ears of Nuno da Cunha, viceroy of the Portuguese India. In order to take revenge on the Bengal government, he sent a more powerful expedition consisting of nine sails manned by three hundred and fifty Portuguese under the command of Antonio da Silva Menezes. The commander was instructed to demand an explanation from the king of Bengal why Affonso de Mello, "his ambassador who had gone to establish relations of peace and friendliness was so badly treated".¹ He was further directed, if necessary, to wage war with 'fire and blood', in case the peaceful persuasion failed. Immediately after his arrival at Chittagong, Menezes sent Jorge Alcocorado to the sultan "with the message of the Portuguese governor and with the threat that if any harm were done to him or if he were not allowed to return within a month, war would be declared against him".² But Sultan Mahmud Shah paid no heed to this threat. He, however, endeavoured to open trade negotiation with the Portuguese. It took Alcocorado more than one month to reach a negotiation. Meanwhile, seeing the expected time was over, Menezes "set fire to a great part of Chittagong" and burnt it down.³ He then ordered his men to put the innocent citizens to the sword and it is stated that the orders were carried out with savage cruelty. Many people were taken captive. Meanwhile, Alcocorado and his men secretly reached Chittagong. The sultan and the Portuguese were preparing for deadlier retaliation against each other. But the political occurrences, in the meantime, underwent such a thorough change that the Portuguese instead of being the sultan's hurtful enemy became his trustful ally.

¹ Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 35

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 36. Sultan Mahmud Shah demanded £ 15,000 as ransom for release of the captives, which being too heavy to pay, Menezes decided to put the city on fire.

Sultan Mahmud Shah had for sometime past been perturbed by the rising power of Sher Khan Sur in Bihar. When that danger amounted to a threat to the security of his kingdom, he became anxious for new allies to meet it. The sultan "asked for Portuguese help and in return he promised to grant them land to erect their factories and permission to build fortresses in Chittagong and Satgaon".¹ As a gesture of friendship, all the Portuguese prisoners were set free at his orders and Affonso de Mello, who had been subjected to an imprisonment for about two years became the sultan's trusted military adviser.

In 1533 A D, the Portuguese, side by side with the Bengal army fought against the invading Pathan forces. In recognition of the services rendered by the Portuguese, the sultan "gave to Affonso de Mello a present of 45,000 *reis* and allotted to each of the Portuguese a daily sum of money equivalent to ten cruzados for food expenses".² He, however, changed his mind as to allowing the Portuguese to build fortresses in Chittagong and Satgaon. Possibly, he thought that if he would give the pirates such an important facility as of building military establishments in his kingdom then they would infringe his authority and make armed rising against him. So, he refrained from allowing them to build fortresses in Chittagong and Satgaon. However, "he permitted Affonso de Mello to build factories and offered to give them custom houses".³ The sultan, at the request of Martim Affonso de Mello,

indeed, appointed Nuno Fernandez Freire, the chief of the custom-house of Chittagong, granted him land with many houses empowering him to realize rent from the Moors and Hindus who lived there and gave him many other privileges over the people The people were indeed surprised to see that the King

1 *Ibid.*, p. 37

2 *Ibid.*, p. 39

3 *Ibid.*

had given the Portuguese so much power and such a firm footing in Bengal. . . .¹

Fernandez Freire, immediately after his appointment, took over the ownership of the customs house of Chittagong. The 'guazil' of Chittagong felt indignant at this and was "very sad" because in the words of Castanheda, "the power that they had was taken (by the Portuguese)."²

Under conditions impregnated with possibilities, Affonso Vaz de Brito, a Portuguese naval commander came to Chittagong (1537 A D), carrying a letter of Nuno da Cunha written in reply to Mahmud Shah's request for help.³ About this time, the piratical activities of the Portuguese at Cambay produced great commotion in the port on which De Brito hesitated to land at the port. The news of this delay might have reached Goa and a Portuguese named Antonio Menezes de Cresto was sent to Chittagong, with merchandise and a letter from the Portuguese governor "explaining the Cambay affair".⁴ This helped much to ease the tension. De Brito after landing at the port, paid visit to Nuno Fernandes Freire at the Portuguese customs house. From Chittagong de Brito went to the court of Gaud to deliver da Cunha's letter to the sultan. In this letter, the Portuguese viceroy brought it to his notice that he was unable to send him any help presently, but "he would assuredly send it the following year".⁵ The sultan became highly pleased at this assurance and at the request of de Brito he set almost all the Portuguese prisoners free, but "kept only five Portuguese, including Affonso Vaz de Brito, as hostages for the promised help".⁶

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Qt, Ibid, p. 46*

³ *Campos, op. cit., p. 39*

⁴ *Ibid., p. 40*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

But the political scene of Bengal was fast changing at this time. In the beginning of the year 1538 A D, Sher Khan again invaded Bengal, and drove the sultan out from the capital. Just at this time, the once sought Portuguese assistance arrived at Chittagong. This help was in the form of a naval fleet commanded by Vasco Peres de Sampayo. The governor of Chittagong dispatched this fleet (rather a portion of the marine forces) to the sultan¹ to overcome the difficulties. But it was too late. The sultan, defeated and driven out from his capital died of wounds.

When the news of the fall of Gaud to Sher Khan reached Chittagong, the private war between Amirza Khan and Khuda Baksh Khan took a serious turn. Nuno Fernandez Freire, whom Mahmud Shah had created the chief of the customs house, intervened and declared in favour of Amirza Khan.² At this time, a Pathan commander, called by the Portuguese the Nogazil, arrived at Chittagong and taking advantage of the private war between the two Husain Shahi governors, took possession of the town of Chittagong.³ But the political situation of Bengal was undergoing a rapid change. The capture of Gaud by the Mughals put the Nogazil in utter distress. Amirza Khan with the help of the Portuguese made the Nogazil captive.⁴ Finding the city in such a precarious condition, Nuno Fernandez Freire, the newly appointed chief of the customs house of Chittagong advised Sampayo, commander of the Portuguese fleet to conquer the city on behalf of the

¹ No temp que Xerchan tomou a cidade de Gouro, chegou a Chatigam Vasco Pires de Sampayo com huma Armada, que O Governador mandava em socorro d' El Rey de Bengala. De Barros p. 503

² Nuno Fernandez os concertou; & ficou Amarzacao. Castanheda, 452

³ *ibid.*, P. 453

⁴ E Amarzacao vedo que vasco Pires nao quisera prender O Nogazil-*ibid.*

king of Portugal.¹ But Sampayo was in dilemma. He could not make up his mind whether to join the sultan of Bengal or to conquer the town for the king of Portugal. The captive Nogazil "asked for the help of Nuno Fernandez Freire preferring rather to be a prisoner of the Portuguese than of the 'Bengalas' ² Fernandez went to the house of the Nogazil and 'dissuaded' the troops of Amirza Khan from seizing the Nogazil but he himself with fifty Portuguese whom Sampayo had sent ashore eventually captured the Nogazil and "imprisoned him in one of Sampayo's vessels whence, after six months captivity the Nogazil managed to escape by bribing a subordinate."³

Meanwhile, a galleot with sixty armed 'Turks' of Raja Suleiman Baisia arrived at Chittagong and joined the allied forces of Amirza Khan and the Portuguese. The Portuguese under Nuno Fernandez Freire, Diogo Rebello and Francis de Barros in collaboration with the troops of Suleiman Baisia conducted the defence.⁴ Castanheda did not, however, specify the attacking party by name. The course of events suggest that the coalition of the Portuguese, Amirza Khan and Raja Suleiman was defeated by the attackers.⁵ In the engagement many Portuguese soldiers including Fernandez Freire were injured. Castanheda, who dilates upon the details at some length makes Sampayo solely responsible for the loss of Chittagong by the Portuguese. He regretfully comments that "through the folly and indiscretion of Sampayo the king of Portugal lost Chittagong which could easily have been taken possession of", considering Sher Khan Sur's pre-occupation with the trouble

1 *Ibid.*

2 Campos, *op. cit.*, p.42

3 Castanheda, p. 454; Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 42

4 Castanheda, p. 454

5 For their identification see *supra*, ch, viii, sec, 1

of conquests elsewhere.¹ Finding no hope of gaining a foothold at the port. Sampayo sailed towards Pegu.²

The great Portuguese historians such as De Barros, Castanheda and others did not write hereafter anything noteworthy concerning the activities of their compatriots in Chittagong. For the narration of events that happened from 1540 to 1576 A D, we have to depend on stray informations cited here and there. The Arakanese, the Afghans, and the Tripuras having held the district by turn for the next four decades, were in no sense, the friends of the Portuguese. The Portuguese in alliance with Sultan Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah fought against Sher Shah. The Afghan rulers "might have taken away from the Portuguese their custom-house and their factory".³ The Arakanese could not forgive the Portuguese for what they had done. The Portuguese courted the alliance with the Burmans, the inveterate enemies of the Arakanese. The Portuguese also took an active part in the war against the Arakanese in Chittagong. Their piratical activities gave much offence to the Tripuras during their sway over the district. That is why from 1539 to 1580 A D the Portuguese encountered strong opposition of the local authorities. It may be assumed that not only all the trading concessions and territorial privileges granted by Sultan Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah were taken away but they were forced to retire from their places of settlement. Nevertheless, the Portuguese did never abandon the port entirely. Thus Pinto writes in 1545 A D that, one Jorge Menhoz sailed his ship "towards the port of Chatigaon in the kingdom of Bengal".⁴

During the Tripura occupation of Chittagong, the Portuguese were deprived of the minimum trading facilities and there was

¹ & assi perdeu el rey de Portugal esta cidade de Chatigaon que se podera soste com pouco trabalho por Xercansur ander ocupadu em sua conquista, come disse a tras. *Castanheda*, p. 455

² *Ibid.*

³ Campos. *op. cit.*, p. 50

⁴ *H J.* p. 34

no alternative except to divert their sails to some other ports of Bengal. With this object in view, they concluded a treaty (on April 30, 1559 A D) with Paramananda Ray, Raja of Bakla. The document was signed by Niamat Khan (Nematchao) and Ganu Biswas (Gannu Bysuar) on behalf of the prince. The signatories to the treaty undertook a journey to Goa to negotiate the agreement with Dom Constantino de Braganza, the Portuguese viceroy of India. The treaty provided that

...(The Portuguese sails) might go there (the port of Bakla) with his licence in the same manner as they used to go to the great port of Bengal (Porto Grande or Chittagong)...and the Portuguese ships shall go there (Chittagong) no more but all shall go to the said port of Bakla and any one who may do the contrary shall be punished and all persons carrying on trade there (with Chittagong) shall lose their ships and goods which will be confiscated by my master the king and they will be punished as rebels.¹

Thus, the purpose of the treaty was to impose a commercial blockade around Chittagong port and to deprive it of its importance as chief port of Bengal. It is not known to what extent this commercial blockade affected the port. But it was the Portuguese who were to be disappointed. A port in Bakla could never be a substitute for Chittagong.

During the subsequent Karrani rule, the Portuguese succeeded in regaining a few of their lost privileges. Caesar Fredericke, while visiting the port town of Chittagong in 1569 A D, saw a fleet of eighteen Portuguese ships "great and small" in size anchored in the ports of Chittagong.²

But the Portuguese were not the people to remain away from piracy inspite of their suffering for their offending activities. Caesar

¹ Surendra Nath Sen, *Studies in Indian History*, p. 4

² *Purchas*, X, 138

Fredericke while travelling in Sandwip found "the Portugalle captains of Chatigan...in arme against Retor of that place (Chittagong) and everyday there were some slaine".¹ The traveller and his companions were spending their hours in great fear and anxiety predicting at every moment retaliatory actions upon their lives by the Afghan governor of Sandwip. At this grave hours, reports reached the island that "the Portugalles of Chatigan had slaine the governor of that citie (Chittagong)".² This only increased the fear of the traveller and his companions who were counting moments of their fateful end. But "contrarie to (their) expectations "the governor of Sandwip "did comfort" them and "bade them that they "should feare nothing". Ultimately, the Portuguese were forced to make a conciliatory agreement with the "governor of the town", "with this condition that the Chiefe Captaine of the Portugals with his ship should depart without any lading".³ The Portuguese captain has, however, been praised by Caesar Fredericke as "a gentleman and of good courage". To avoid further deterioration of relation between the native rulers and the Portuguese inhabitants of that locality, the Portuguese captain "contented to depart to his great hindrance rather than he would seeke to hinder to many of his friends as were there".⁴ Thereupon, the Portuguese captain sailed away to Arakan, where he, according to our traveller, was hospitably received by the king of Arakan.

Thus, the Portuguese, though turned out from Chittagong would not forsake their old bases. They made desperate attempts to regain their trade facilities previously enjoyed during Sultan Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah's reign. As neither the Arakanese, nor the Tripuras, nor the Afghans would allow them to carry on piratical activities at Chittagong, they carried on their depredations with sword and fire. Their piratical activities caused much bloodshed to the contending parties, thus giving no peace to the inhabitants of this region.

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER XI

CHITTAGONG UNDER THE ARAKANESE REGIME

Section I Chittagong under the Arakanese Rulers

Arakan, "in fact, a continuation of the Chittagong plain"¹ was neither purely a Burmese nor an Indian territory till the eighteenth century of the Christian Era. Referring to the geographical position of the country, Sir Henry Yule very aptly remarks that Arakan "bears much the same relation to Burma that Norway did to Sweden".² Shut off from Burma by a hill range, it is located far away from the Indian capitals. Chiefly for its location, it not only remained independent for the most part of its history, but endeavoured to expand its territory in the surrounding tracts whenever opportunity came and Chittagong was the first country to be the victim of the territorial ambition of the Arakanese monarchs.

The land, which is called Arakan by the foreigners is called by its own people Yakain³ or Yekein⁴ or Rakhaing⁵ or the land of the Rakkas, a kind of demigods in Indian mythology. The word Rak-

¹ Hamilton, *op. cit.*, II, 800

² J A S B, XXVI (1857), 2

³ A R, V (1808), 223

⁴ Hamilton, *op. cit.*, II, 802

⁵ The word Rakhaing is a corruption of Rek-khaik, derived from Pali word Rakkha which in its popular signification means a monster half man half beast.....The country was named Yek-khapura by Buddhist missionaries from India (J A S B, XIII, (1844), 24),

-haing is derived from Pali word Rakkha Tunga (Sans. Raksha Tunga) or hill of the Rakkhas. The *Arakanese Chronicle* mention the settlement of a savage people called Bee-loo¹ that stands for Pali word Rakkha or Raksasas. Representative images of Biloo (ogre) or Raksasas can be seen in the carvings on the walls of Ananda Temple.² Hamilton informs us that the 10 ft. high image of the Buddha in the chief Arakanese temple was being guarded by five images of Racshyas (Raksas). All the images were carried to Amarapura after the annexation of Arakan to Burma in 1784.³ Burmese word taung meaning hill, hill ranges and elevated land can be found as suffix in such name as Bilauk taung, a hill range on the border between south eastern Burma and western Thailand. Therefore, the supposition that the name Rakkaing bears the sense as a derivative of Rakkha Tunga or the hill of the Rakkhas is rather tenable.

The name Rakhaing, it seems, is of much antiquity. Sir H Yule wants to indentify 'the country named Argyre in Ptolemy with Arakan the name being supposed to be derived from silver mines existing there.'⁴ Sir H Yule's assumption is supported by Mc Crindle and D G E Hall.⁵ The old name 'Rakhuin' enters in a Pagan inscription dated 1299 A D.⁶ A Burmese poet of the fifteenth century

¹ J A S B, XXXIII(1864), 24

² J A S B XXVI (1857), 10

³ Hamilton, *op. cit.*, II, 804. The tradition relating to the Rakkhas or Raksasas also fairly spread throughout north eastern India especially in Assam (A R, XVI (1828), 349)

⁴ Sir H Yule in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical society*, November 1882; also, Phayre, *op. cit.*, p. 42

⁵ Mc Crindle, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 162; Hall, *op. cit.* p. 141; also Sir H Yule, in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Nov., 1882

⁶ J Bur. R S (June, 1959), p. 60

mentions the country by the name of 'Yakhaing',¹ which appears as Rahan² in Rashiduddin's (c. 1310 A D) work, Nicolo Conti (1420-1430 A D) writes Rachani the name of the country.³ Sidi Ali Chelebi, a Turkish navigator belonging to the middle of the sixteenth century writes it Rakanj (رکنج).⁴ The authors of the *Ain-i-Akbari*, *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi* and *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin* write it Arkh-ank (ارخنگ), which appears also with a slight change in the *Alamgirnama* and *Fathya-i-Ibbriya*. All these forms are closely related to the original one. In the medieval Bengali literary works and in Rennell's map, the name is written Roshang indicating its origin in Rakshatunga. In colloquial Chittagong dialect, the country is called as Rohang 'sh' being replaced by 'h'. To the Portuguese and other European travellers and chroniclers, it is Recon, Rakan, Arracam, Aracao, Orrakan, Arrakan and Van Linschoten writes it Arakan which is nearest to the modern name.

The early relation between Chittagong and Burma, especially Arakan, has already been discussed in connexion with the different regimes in Chittagong. The relation between Chittagong and Arakan is influenced by geographical, ethnological, cultural and historical considerations. From about 1580 till 1666 A D, nearly a century, Chittagong was under almost uninterrupted Arakanese rule which is undoubtedly an important period marked by momentous events. During this period, a company of eight sovereigns successively ruled Arakan along with Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts with full despotic power. All of them were not of same calibre; some were good soldiers and conquerors, who defied a great continental power like the Mughal Empire and an expansionist power like the Burmese Empire. Some were chastisers of the European pirates; some were hard-headed tyrants, personification of cruelties and lived

¹ *Ibid.*

² E D, I, 73

³ H J, p. 34

⁴ J A S B, V (1836), 466.

on nerves like many of their ancestors and successors. Some were great patrons of learning who will ever be remembered with gratitude in the pages of the history of Bengali literature. It will be more convenient to go through the history of Chittagong under the successive Arakanese sovereigns.

Meng Phalaung or Sikandar Shah (1571-1593 A D)

Meng Phalaung or Sikandar Shah, worthy son of conqueror father Min Bin or Sultan (1531-1553 A D) ascended the throne of Arakan in 1571 A D. The British traveller Ralph Fitch (1586 A D) mentions Chittagong along with Ramu as subject to Arakan.¹ The *Rajamala* gives detailed account of the conquest of Chittagong by Sikandar Shah. But neither the account of Ralph Fitch nor the *Rajamala* bears the precise date of his conquest of Chittagong. It appears from Fitch's account that the king of Arakan must have conquered Chittagong before the end of the year 1586 A D (the approximate date of visit of Ralph Fitch). But the event could not have taken place earlier than 1580 A D, because before that date he had to be on his guard against the aggressive designs of Bureng Naung (Baying Naung, 1551-81 A D), the imperialist king of the Toungoo dynasty in Burma. Sir A P Phayre writes ; "The great king of kings (of Burma) determined that the king of that country (Arakan) should be reduced to the position, his ancestors had held towards the ancient kings of Burma."² With this object in mind the Burmese king sent an expedition against Arakan. Probably, the expedition failed to ac-

¹ "From Satagaon I travelled by the country of the king of Tippera, with whom the Mogores or Mogen Maghs) have almost continuall warres. The Mogen which be of the kingdom of Recon and Rame be stronger than the king of Tippera, so that Chatigan or Porto Grande is often times under king of Recon" (Foster, *Ralph Fitch*, p. 26)

² Phayre, *op. cit.*, p. 119

hieve the desired effect. The Burmese king with an yearning to make a common cause against Sikandar Shah sent a mission to the Mughal government (probably in Bengal); but the outcome of this mission is not known. The sudden death of the Burmese king gave much relief to Sikandar Shah. With the decrease of the Burmese peril on the eastern side Sikandar Shah could now divert his attention to Chittagong which was then under the occupation of the Tripuras. The Arakanese most probably put an end to the Tripura rule over Chittagong in or around 1582 A.D. The account of Ralph Fitch indicates that the Arakanese conquest of Chittagong did not conclude the hostilities between Tripura and Arakan for the supremacy over Chittagong till the time of his visit. The *Rajamala* gives a detailed account of the war between Amaraman-kyā and Sikandar Shah for the domination over Chittagong. Besides the territorial ambition of the contending monarchs, there was another cause of hostility between them. The Tripura king gave shelter to Adam Shah, the Arakanese governor of Ramu and Chakaria. The latter had incurred displeasure of the Arakanese king and to avoid punishment he fled from his assigned territory.

The Tripura king undertook a military preparation on a vast scale to recover Chittagong. He deployed all the available forces under him.¹ The army of the 'twelve Bangalas' also took part in this expedition.² The Portuguese troops joined the invading forces,³ probably in the hope of regaining their lost hold on the port town. The king, being satisfied at this military preparations,⁴ gave orders to his troops to depart for Chittagong,

¹ সর্ব সৈন্য নৈয়া গেল বস জ যুদ্ধে ॥

—*Rajamala*, III, 27

² দ্বাদশ বাঙ্গালা সৈন্য চলিল সহিতে ॥

—*Ibid.*

More accurately, the armies of the principalities of Bengal, popularly known as 'Bara Bhuiyas'. Probably, Amaraman-kyā gained the alliance of some of the Afghan and Hindu chieftains of the deltaic Bengal who had been suffering much from the Magh-Firingi depredations

³ ফোজির সৈন্য তেল নৌক য়ে ভরিয়া ॥

—*Ibid.*

⁴ তুট হৈল অমর দেব সৈন্য দেখিয়া ॥

—*Ibid.*

in or around 158⁰ A.D. Rajadhar Narayan, the crown prince was appointed commander-in-chief of all military forces. Amar Durlabh Narayan, another son of the king was appointed commander of the invading army.¹ To assist them in the field three other veteran generals (Narayan) namely Chandra Darpa, Chndra Sinha and Chhatrajit Nazir were ordered to march forth. With a remarkable speed, the invading forces reached Chittagong and occupied it.² The myriads then crossed the Karnaphuli perhaps by a bridge of boats³ which reminds one of the memorable crossing of the Bosphorus by the Persian forces under Xerxes. All the 'six kingdoms' (rather subject principalities) including Ramu were brought into subjection by the Tripuras.⁴ The victorious army then according to the *Rajamala*, resolved to conquer the 'kingdom' of Deang Uria.⁵ While the Tripuras were thinking whether they would follow their conquests or to make a halt there, all on a sudden, a small Arakanese regiment appeared on the scene.⁶

1 *Ibid.*

2 চাটিয়াতে গিয়া সৈন্য শীঘ্র উত্তরিল।

—*Ibid.*

3 কর্ণফুলী গাছ দের সৈন্য পার হৈল।

—*Ibid.*

4 বাহু আদ করি রাজ ছয় খানা লয়।

—*Ibid.*

5 দে গঙ্গ উরিয়া রাজা লইল অশয় ॥

—*Ibid.*

The question may arise how the Tripuras could reach Ramu without conquering the principality of Diang, which lies just south of the port town of Chittagong. In reply, it can be said that the Tripuras followed a hill side tract along the river Halda and the upper reaches of the river Karnaphuli, thus avoiding the common route through the coastal plains. Therefore the 'kingdom' of Diang which lies on the seacoast far away from the route presently used by the attacking Tripura forces remained unconquered even then. It is to be noted that the *Rajamala* does not mention any confrontation between the Tripura and the Arakanese forces, which event suggests that the Tripuras used interior jungle route.

6 হেন কালে যব সৈন্য যুদ্ধ দিখ অসি।

—*Ibid.*

The Arakanese army according to the *Rajamala*, frightened at seeing the vast host of Tripura soldiers. The Arakanese, thereupon, made an intrigue with the Portuguese mercenaries and won them over to their side.¹ The Portuguese treachery decided the fate of the war. The Arakanese vigorously charged the Tripuras, checked their progress and compelled them to relinquish their position.

The Tripuras were prevented from getting any supply of provisions. The discomfiture of the Tripuras was complete and they were forced to retreat in the face of the Arakanese attack. Many soldiers died of starvation, even the princes could not escape hardships and had to feed themselves on roots and plants collected from the nearby hills.² Pursued by the Arakanese soldiers close upon the heels, the retreating army arrived at Chittagong proper. There the Tripuras halted for rest and refreshment, those who waited for cooking rice and stayed long were caught and killed by the Arakanese; others who were satisfied only with uncooked rice and hurriedly crossed the river, were saved.³ Thus the ill-calculated Arakan expedition of the Tripura king met with the same fate as the Moscow expedition of Napoleon or the Sicilian expedition of Nicias. Terribly beaten by the Arakanese forces, the Tripuras fell back over northern Chittagong. Nevertheless, the Tripuras soon regained their morale and instead of being pursued by the enemy they began to chase them. About one thousand Arakanese soldiers fell as a result of this charge.⁴ The three commanders, who rushed at the retreating Arakanese

¹ ফেরাজি সৈ সজে মবেতে মিলায়
ফেরাজিরে রাজ খন ছাড়ে সেইকন ॥

—*Ibid*

² রাজপুর সৈ সজে অন্ন ট পাইল ।
যোজা আলু খাইল গোদী মুগা নাম হৈল ॥

— *Ibid.* p. 28

Ghongimurha cannot be indentified at present.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ সহস্রেক মব মারিছিল সেই কন ।

—*Ibid.*

captured the fort of Satgarh¹ by showing personal bravery. The reverses compelled the Arakanese monarch to sue for peace and he requested prince Rajadhar, the crown prince and the commander-in-chief to postpone the war till next year. Prince Rajadhar informed his father of the Arakanese proposal for cessation of hostilities. The victory of the Tripuras caused much rejoicings in the capital. The Tripura king agreed to the Arakanese king's proposal of temporary suspension of hostility between them and ordered his soldiers to retire to their winter quarters.

Sikandar Shah, however did not wait for the next year. He personally led a campaign into Chittagong and made a speedy conquest of it in utter disregard to the agreement. He stayed in Chittagong, probably, to be in close contact with the military operations of his own army. The Tripura king became infuriated at this foul play of the Arakanese king and ordered mobilization of all his available forces. The reorganized army which was put under the supreme command of crown prince Rajadhar Narayan was ordered to march into Chittagong. The Tripura army entered Chittagong and encamped somewhere in that place. The Arakanese king thereupon, wished to make peace and sent the brothers (Tripura princes) a crown of ivory as present and a letter, the subject matter of which is not stated by the *Rajamala*. Prince Rajadhar accepted the present and the other prince accepted the letter. Prince Jujhar who became angry at not getting anything, abused the Arakanese.² The messenger reported the whole matter to the Arakanese king, who became infuriated at the disrespectful reply of Prince Jujhar Singh. The Arakanese king, thereupon, rallied his soldiers to fight the Tripuras, who were also drawn up to fight. The Arakanese avoided the pitched battle, probably, seeing the inadequacy of the number of their soldiers. So they resorted to jungle fighting. Prince Jujhar Singh, an impatient

² সাতগড় তিনরী লইকে পুনি।

— *Ibid.*

The place cannot be located in modern map

³ *Ibid.*, p. 34

and hot headed youngman, ignoring the counsels of the veterans arrayed his forces in the plains at dead of night. Most of the Arakanese soldiers stayed behind the walls of the fort and only four thousand of them arrived at the battle field. The gallant prince swooped down on the Arakanese army and dispersed them with great slaughter.¹ The Tripura army then rushed against walls of the Arakanese fort. The whole Tripura army under prince Rajadhar was employed to pull down the Arakanese fort. The Arakanese had, it is said about thirty thousand guns besides other types of fire arms in the fort and they began to shell heavily on the besieging Tripura soldiers, resulting in heavy casualties. During operation, an elephant, named Jayamangal on which prince Rajadhar was riding became injured by gunshot. Prince Jujhar Singh wanted to mount this elephant in preference to his horse. The animal already maddened with severe pain, became violent seeing the glittering ornaments of the prince, seized him and trampled the unfortunate prince under its feet. Soon after Jujhar Singh's tragic death, Rajadhar the crown prince and commander in-chief of the Tripura army became injured by a javelin thrown by an Arakanese soldier from a hillock nearby. He narrowly escaped the fatal end. The leaderless Tripura army began to run away from the action whence they were given a hot chase by the Arakanese.² Sikandar Shah again sent a message to King Amaramanikya requesting him to send back Adam Shah, the fugitive governor of Ramu and Chakaria so that hostility between them should cease.³ But the Tripura king paid no heed to this request

¹ অসংস্কৃত লেখা ক'টে মর সৈন্য দিও ॥
 ছিন্ন ভি 'হ'ল সব মগধের সেনা ।
 ভক্ত দিয়া ম'লে গেল আপন'র পানী ॥

—*Ibid.*, p. 36

² ভক্ত ছিল বাজসৈন্য সগর প্রমাণ
 পাছে পাছে ঘটন্য আসে স্বপ্নমান ॥

—*Ibid.*, p. 38

³ রানব, ছ'বুয় ছিল আমম বদশাহ ।
 তোমাস্থানে রয়ে গিয়া করিয়া সহায় ॥

and transferred the exilee to some hidden place. King Amaramanikya determined to continue the war though he knew its consequences beforehand. He was utterly defeated and failed to save his metropolis even. The chronicler gives a detailed description of the Arakanese ravages in Tripura towns including the capital. The *Rajamala* marks this event with date Chaitra, 1510 Saka/March-April, 1588 A D).¹ This fact is roughly corroborated by the accounts of Ralph Fitch.

The most significant result of the war is that it decided the agelong rivalry between the Arakanese and the Tripuras for the supremacy over Chittagong. The Arakanese gained the possession of the whole of Chittagong including the Hill Tracts and they retained it for about a century and the Tripuras permanently lost Chittagong. One of the noteworthy events during the Arakanese raids on Tripura was that the image of Chandragopinatha, perhaps the chief royal deity was brought from Udaipur, capital of Tripura to be reinstalled in a temple of Chittagong.² The Tripuras could never regain possession of Chittagong though they never refrained from claiming sovereignty over it.

Meng Radzagyí or Solim Shah I (1593-1612 A D)

Meng Phalaung or Sikandar Shah was succeeded by his son, Meng Radzagyí or Solim Shah I. In the early years of his reign, the governorship of Chittagong was being held by Mahapinnyagyaw a great scholar with a religious turn of mind.³ He was a wise minister to the king and conducted his affairs in statesmanlike manner.

তাহাকে বাঁধিয়া পাঠাও অমায় বিবিত।

ভবে আশা সঙ্গে তোমা হবে বড় প্রীতি।।

—*ibid.*

¹ পনেরশত দশ শকে চৈত্র মাস তা ত।

প্রথমে আশিলা মঘ ঈদরপুয়েতে।।

—*ib'd.*, p. 42

² চন্দ্রগোপীনাথ মূর্তি চাটিয়ায়ে ছিল।

অমর মানিক্য কালে মঘ নিয়াছিল।।

—*ibid.*, p. 266

³ Referring to his erudition Harvey writes: "His compilation of legal precedents (especially Manu, the great Hindu law-giver) was thereafter among the most valuable works of its kind throughout Burma," (*Outline of Burmese History*, p. 93)

In 1598 A D the Arakanese king joined the king of Burma in the latter's expedition against the king of Pegu. Mahapinnyagyaw, governor of Chittagong with the army under his command accompanied with the king. The Arakanese king was also helped by his Portuguese subjects, for which, they received generous treatment from the king.¹ The expedition was crowned with success. On his return journey from Pegu Mahapinnyagyaw "the Lord of Chittagong" died and most probably Sinabadi, an uncle of the Arakanese king,² succeeded him.

The friendly relation between the Arakanese and the Portuguese soon turned to hostile one. In 1602, the Portuguese captured Sandwip from the king of Bakla. The patriotic inhabitants of Sandwip rose in rebellion. Carvalho, ruler of Sandwip made an earnest request to Manuel de Mattos, 'Commander of Bandel of Dianga',³ to save the Portuguese of the island. In response to this request, Mattos made a descent upon Sandwip. Carvalho and Mattos then became the joint governors of the island.

The king of Arakan thought of the Portuguese conquest of Sandwip a menace to the peace of this region. His view was also shared by the king of Bakla, who "joined the king of Arakan".⁴ In the words of Fr Guerreiro, the Arakanese king "began to be alarmed at the power" of the Portuguese of his dominion. His suspicion of the Portuguese designs upon his territory, according to Fr Guerreiro was "fostered" by the counsels of his Muslim courtiers, who were then "in much favour" of him. They advised the king that "it was unwise to place so much trust in the Portuguese; for they were a people whom it was

¹ See *Infra*, ch Xli.

² Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 69. Sinabadi might be Portuguese corruption of either Senapati or Simhapati. Campos writes that in 1602 'king' of Chittagong was "the uncle of the king of Arakan".

³ Denvets *op. cit.*, II, 143

⁴ Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 69

very difficult to dislodge from a place where they had once taken root".¹

The Arakanese king, in order to chastise the pirates, dispatched a fleet, which reached Diang on November 8, 1602 A D. The Portuguese of Diang got off safely. The Portuguese inhabitants of the town and other places began to follow their suit. Only a small Portuguese fleet under Manoel de Mattos remained anchoring off the port of Diang probably to keep vigil and to protect the Portuguese people against the impending Arakanese attack. The Arakanese fleet started operation, The 'badly equipped' Portuguese fleet under Mattos could not withstand the attack and the captain himself was wounded. "In honour of their victory" The Arakanese "drank and feasted in the wildest joy".²

Mattos, however, managed to escape to Sandwip where Domingo Carvalho was exercising sway over the island as a "governor under Portuguese king". On November 10, the two captains "made a surprise attack on the enemy's ships with such fury and violence that they were completely routed".³ According to the Portuguese historians, about one hundred and forty nine ships were captured by the Portuguese. Sinabadi, governor of Chittagong was among the numerous Arakanese killed in this combat. Sinabadi was probably succeeded by Anaporan, the younger brother of the Arakanese monarch.⁴

¹ Fernao Guerreiro, 'The Relations', qt C H Payne, *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, p. 195

² Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 69

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Bocarro says that Anaporan was the second son of the king reigning in 1610 A D. According to *Documentos Remettidos*, Anaporan was a nephew of the king of Arakan who ruled in 1607 A D. According to Fr Manrique and Farya e Sousa, Anaporan was a brother of Meng Radzagyi. The latter two authorities seem more evidential than others.

The Portuguese victory and the possibility of their raid on Chittagong excited the inhabitants of the city with fear. They fled to whichever direction they liked and the whole of the city including its fort was left undefended. The Portuguese, however, did not dare to capture the town and its fort. In this way the common people were subjected to the repeated Portuguese incursions which caused extreme suffering to the common people.

The king hurriedly sent an army to drive 'the devils to the sea' and at the same time to take retaliation on the Portuguese settlements in Arakan proper.¹ This Arakanese retaliation was executed with many 'cruelties'. According to Fr Guerreiro, the Arakanese monarch "inflicted" "many injuries" on the Portuguese, "destroying many Christian places, burning churches and slaying and taking captives many people including Fr Francisco Fernando".² The Portuguese sources, however, admits that "the king set to liberty the women on the day following their imprisonment".³ Fr Fernandez (or Fernando) was mercilessly thrashed and was deprived of one eye. On November 14, 1602 A D he expired in prison. Fr Andre Boves was also cast into prison with chains round his neck and legs.⁴

The Arakanese king then resolved to put an end to the Portuguese influence over the island of Sandwip which was then under Carvalho's control. The Arakanese intensified their assault on Sandwip in the beginning of the year 1603 A D. He "sent an enormous fleet of a thousand sail consisting of the most Frigates, some greater, Catures and Cossas' against Carvalho.⁵ According to the Portuguese historians, the Portuguese were 'victorious' in

¹ Campos *op. cit.*, p. 70

² Guerreiro, p. 211

³ Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 70

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 102

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 71

this engagement. "The gallant Carvaiho with only sixteen vessels destroyed the whole fleet of the Arakanese king. Nearly 2000 Arakanese were killed and a hundred and thirty of their ships were destroyed, while the Portuguese lost only six men".¹

But the events that followed this engagement do not justify the narration of the Portuguese chroniclers. How this "brilliant victory" of the Portuguese "badly damaged" their own fleet has not been explained. "Carvalho soon found out that he could not withstand another attack of the king of Arakan whose resources were unlimited. The Portuguese in company of the native converts, thereafter, evacuated Sandwip and transported all their belongings to Sripur, Bakla and Chandecan, whereupon the king of Arakan at last became master of it".² According to Fr Guerreiro, the Arakanese capture of Sandwip took place in March, 1603 A.D.³

The hostile relation between the Arakanese and the Portuguese however, did not last long. A reconciliation was eventually reached between the contending parties. According to the chronicles of the Dominicans, "the king of Arakan actually offered to rebuild at his own expense the church and the residence of the Dominicans which he had destroyed and requested them to stay in his kingdom".⁴

The few years of peace following this reconciliation provided the Portuguese with sufficient time to strengthen their bases. They conducted several hostile incursions in different parts of the kingdom. Unable to tolerate their evil doings anymore, the Arakanese king determined to destroy their bases of operations. Accordingly, in 1607 A.D. he ordered his army to take necessary action against them. The Portuguese of the town were cruelly dealt with. According to their own historians, about six hundred Portuguese were

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72

³ *Guerreiro*, p. 211

⁴ *Campos, op. cit.*, p. 70

put to death in Diang alone.¹ The survivors of this wholesale massacre escaped to the coastal islands. Thus the Portuguese power in Chittagong was greatly reduced though not crushed. Their complete evacuation about which their historians express grief, is unlikely as Pyrard de Laval during his staying in Chittagong saw many Portuguese living "in freedom at the ports on this (Chittagong) coast of Bengal".²

After having the Portuguese power been crippled, the Arakanese reasserted their supremacy over the region. In the same year (1607) an Arakanese expeditionary force from Chittagong plundered the islands of Male (? Maldives, a group of islands in the Indian Ocean) and killing its ruler they captured huge booty. They returned to Chittagong with immense booty, Pyrard the traveller and his companions. At first Pyrard was taken to be a Portuguese, but when it was discovered that he was a Frenchman he was accorded a warm reception.³

At this time, the island of Sandwip was being ruled by Manuel de Mattos, the Portuguese "Commander of Bandel of Dianga".⁴ After his death, the administration of the island was seized by Fate Khan, an officer under Manuel de Mattos. In order to secure his position, Fate Khan put all the Christian inhabitants including women and children of the island to death. He "then collected together a number of Moors and Pathans, with whom he manned a fleet of forty sail".⁵

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 78. This is the number given by the king in a letter to the Dutch at Masulipatam in 1608 A D (vide Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 331n).

² Francois Pyrard de Laval, *Voyage of Francois Pyrard of Laval*, tr. Albert Gray, I, 334

³ *Ibid.*, p. 314

⁴ Danvers, *op. cit.*, II, 143.

⁵ *Ibid.* Mattos left the Island in charge of Fate Khan during his absence.

Fate Khan, governor of Sandwip assumed supreme power in his island kingdom and "inscribed upon his colours" Fate Khan, by the grace of God, Lord of Sundiva, shedder of Christian blood, and destroyer of the Portuguese Nation".¹ He "determined to put down this set of robbers" to make the mouth of the Meghna free from Portuguese piracy. To achieve this aim, he conducted a surprise attack on the Portuguese fleet near Shahbazpur (Xabaspur of the Portuguese writers).² In the naval engagement that followed, Fate Khan was killed by Sebastian Pinto. On his death, his brother became the ruler of Sandwip.

The Portuguese under Gonzales now wanted to recapture Sandwip. Seeing that they were not sufficiently strong to make their attempt a successful one, they concluded a treaty³ with the king of Bakla. Supported by the army and navy of Bakla, the Portuguese laid siege to the fort of Sandwip in March 1609 A.D.⁴ The landing of the Portuguese soldiers was bravely opposed by "a large number of resolute Moors, commanded by Fate Khan's brother".⁵ But the defenders could not resist the besiegers from landing in the island. The Muslim soldiers then took shelter behind the walls of the fort. The fort was stormed and taken by the invaders in spite of a gallant defence by the Muslims. The Portuguese, thenceforth, retaliated in a very cruel manner. All the Muslim inhabitants of the island, a thousand in number were massacred in cold blood.⁶ Sebastiao Gonzales became absolute master of the island and began to govern it as an independent prince.⁷

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 144

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

Anaporan, the younger brother of the Arakanese king succeeded Sinabadi to the governorship of Chittagong. But not long after his appointment, a discrepancy arose between the king and him. Ultimately, Anaporan was expelled from his post. The fugitive prince took asylum in Sandwip and sought Gonzales' assistance in recovering his post. Gonzales, "accordingly endeavoured to aid him but soon found that he had not sufficient numbers to oppose so powerful a king."¹ So he withdrew his assistance, and "he accordingly returned to Sundiva, accompanied by Anaporan."² Most probably, the Arakanese king won Gonzales over to his side by diplomacy. The fugitive governor came to Sandwip "with his wife, family, treasure and elephants".³ All these things were enough to excite the greed of the pirate governor. Soon after, Gonzales married the sister of Anaporan. The latter then was persuaded to change his faith over to Catholic religion. It was strongly suspected that the fugitive governor was secretly murdered or poisoned to death by Gonzales who next seized all his property "giving no portion of them to his widow or son".⁴ The unfortunate fugitive governor thus not only lost his dominion but all his belongings, his religion and lastly his life. This is an appropriate reward for the alliance with a wicked person.

Gonzales' illicit connection with the widow of Anaporan gave rise to much scandal among the Portuguese. In order to put a stop to this, "Gonzales endeavoured to marry the widow to his brother Antonio Tibao".⁵ But the lady would not change her religion. Meanwhile, Gonzales forcibly took possession of some Arakanese ships. The Arakanese king "concluded a peace with Gonzales, who thereupon gave up the widow of Anaporan, and she subsequently married the 'king' of Chittagong."⁶

¹ *Ibid.*, p 145

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

The *Baharistan* throws light upon the contemporary occurrences in Chittagong. It states that Anik Farank,¹ the unfortunate son of Anaporan sought Mughal alliance to avenge himself the murder of his father. He sent an envoy to Islam Khan, the Mughal governor of Dhaka through the mediation of Ihtiman Khan. The *Baharistan* states :

It was stipulated that after meeting Islam Khan he (Anik Farank) would leave his sons at Jahangirnagar and would personally be responsible for the affairs of Bistam Gawsawal Firingi (Sebastian Gonzales) the master of Sandwip, and that he would accept Sandwip as a Jagir for his maintenance and would enlist himself in the circle of the loyal servants of the imperial court.²

But the plan fell flat owing to the opposition of Musa Khan, a Mughal courtier.

After Anaporan's expulsion, the king of Arakan appointed his younger son governor of Chittagong under the title of 'Alamanja',³ meaning Alaman, the governor. The prince was then only twenty-three

¹ *Baharistan*, I, 89. The name Anik Farank appears more a Christian than a Magh name. Probably, Mirza Nathan took him for a converted Christian as Farank is the origin of the term Firingi the Persian name for the Europeans as well as the converted Christians. As his father was a converted Christian, it is highly probable that the son might also belong to that faith. This also contribute to our supposition that there might be a father and son relation between Anaporan and Anik Farank. The author of the *Baharistan* clearly states that Anik Farank was "the nephew of Solim, Raja of the Maghs", though the name of the father of Anik Farank has not been mentioned in the work.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Manrique*, I, 301

years old. The investiture took place towards the end of the life of the king, perhaps about the year 1610 A D. Manrique describes him as a 'young and sagacious' prince and "endowed with good parts'. He is further stated by the traveller as a great friend of the Portuguese. "The prudent young prince" says Manrique, "immediately set to work to acquire a full knowledge of his Province (Chittagong) and of how he could best increase its natural advantage and also protect it."¹

Meanwhile, King Solim Shah had to face a new challenge from a different quarter. It was the gradual Mughal expansion towards his territory. Danvers writes that the Mughals, about this time (1609), "contemplated the conquest of the kingdom of Balua".² The contemporary French traveller Pyrard de Laval, gives reference to the Mughal designs upon the Arakanese kingdom and the consequent military preparations of the Arakanese king. He writes: 'About this time, I left (1607 A D), the Mogor (the Mughal Emperor Jahangir) had declared war against him, and the king (the Arakanese king) was preparing to receive him with more than 200,000 men and 10,000 elephants.'³ In 1608 A D, Islam Khan, subahdar of Bengal transferred his capital from Rajmahal to Jahangirnagar. Thus the danger of the Mughal imperialism amounted to a threat to the security of the Arakanese kingdom. The Arakanese king also thought that the most effective defence is offence. With this end in view, the Arakanese king in 1610 A D made a treaty with Gonzales in which it was agreed that "Gonzales should prevent the Mughals from passing to the kingdom of Balua until the king of Arakan should have arrived there with his army."⁴ "Gonzales should command the allied fleets and act in a concert

¹ *Ibid*, p. 302

² Danvers, *op. cit.*, II, 146

³ Laval, I, 327

⁴ Danvers, *op. cit.*, II, 146

with the Arakan army as it marched along the coast and that all territory conquered should be equally divided between the two contracting parties."¹ The king, accordingly, took the field with a vast host." He also dispatched by sea a fleet of 200 vessels, carrying 4,000 men, which was to join with Gonzales's fleet and be under his command."² The Arakanese invading forces overran some parts of the Mughal territory. But Gonzales fell away from allegiance to the agreement. "It was thought either that he had accepted a bribe not to interfere with the advance of the Mughal, or that he had acted thus treacherously to revenge the death of the Portuguese who were slain in Bangue of Dianga."³ The king of Arakan, therefore, "had to meet the Mughal forces single-handed."⁴ The Arakanese forces ultimately faced a defeat "owing to the shameful defection of the Portuguese."⁵ King Meng Radzagyi "escaped on an elephant, with only a few followers, to the fort of Chittagong."⁶ Gonzales committed another villainy when "he took possession of the Arakan fleet with which he was entrusted and murdered all the Arakan captains. What is more, with a bold effrontery he set out with his fleet and plundered all the forts on the Arakan coast especially those of Chittagong, Maju, and Ramu."⁷ "This treachery and insolence on the part of Gonzales greatly enraged the King, who caused a stake to be run through the body of his nephew, whom Gonzales had given as a hostage for the king's fleet and had the body exposed on a high place below the fort of Arakan that his uncle might see him as he went out."⁸

¹ J A S B, N S, XVIII (1922), 46-47

² Danvers, *op. cit.*, II, 146

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ J A S B, N S, XVIII (1922), 46-47

⁶ Danvers, *op. cit.*, II, 146

⁷ Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 87; also Danvers, *op. cit.*, II, 147

⁸ Danvers, *op. cit.*, II, 47

Meng Radzagyi died in 1612 A D leaving the Portuguese affairs in his kingdom unsettled. His eldest son, Meng Khamaung or Husain Shah succeeded to the throne in the same year.

Meng Khamaung or Husain Shah (1612-1622 A D)

At the time of his accession, the governorship of the province of Chittagong was being held by Alamanja, his younger brother. Fr Manrique states that the two brothers were hostile to each other even during their father's life time. According to Manrique, the governor engaged in military build up "for securing himself against any violence which his elder brother might employ when he became absolute Lord and Emperor of Arracan."¹ The cause of Manrique's estimation of the governor of Chittagong and the corresponding hatred of his brother Husain Shah, the "barbarian monarch" of Arakan, is not far to seek. Alamanja, governor of Chittagong was a great friend of the Portuguese; on the other hand, Husain Shah bore bitter hatred against these people in his mind. While trying to reduce Nicolo de Brito to obedience at Syriam, the crown prince during his father's reign suffered imprisonment at the hands of the Portuguese captain for the time being.² From this time his only aim was to crush the Portuguese power. Naturally the governor's policy of friendship with the Portuguese was held in detestation by the Arakanese monarch and his courtiers. "Immediately after his succession, the elder brother (King Husain Shah) determined", in the words of Manrique, "to satisfy his hatred". "This lack of love and his unbounded hatred," in the view of Manrique, "led him to invent faults and crimes on the part of his younger brother in order to prove that the war he was about to make on him was justifiable."³ The expedition sent

¹ Manrique, I, 302

² Danvers, *op. cit.*, II, 140

³ Manrique, I, 309-310

by the Arakanese king against the governor of Chittagong was pronounced by the councillors of the Arakanese king "as wholly just and right".

Anticipating the scheme of attack upon his territory, Alamanja, governor of Chittagong concluded a defensive alliance with Sebastian Gonzales, ruler of Sandwip. According to the terms of alliance about four hundred Portuguese were employed to guard his body as well as the city. The Arakanese expeditionary forces laid siege to the city of Chittagong for a period of four months but without success. It appears that the governor "had met with considerable success (and) he hoped for a favourable ending."¹

But the expectation of the governor could not be fulfilled. King Husain Shah came to know that "the Ruler of Sundiva (Gonzales) was secretly calling on the king of Assaram² to intervene on behalf of the prince of Chatigan by sending him one hundred and forty Portuguese soldiers and much powder, munitions, and instruments of war."³ So, in order to place his younger brother apart from the combination, the Arakanese king tried to win over the Portuguese to his side. Meanwhile, the Arakanese had intensified their siege on Chittagong and the besieged Portuguese fell in great distress. They now "felt that the war was being made by their Emperor the supreme Lord of the Magh Empire, not on them but only against his own brother."⁴ Moreover, they thought that, "being brothers, they would come to some agreement" in future. So they deputed a mission to the Arakanese court to make the

¹ *Ibid.*

² Assaram should be Assam. But it is unlikely that the contemporary Ahom king was invited to intervene. Probably, the king of Tripura, the traditional enemy of the Arakanese, and who was the neighbour of the Ahom king is here confused by the traveller to be the king of Assam himself.

³ *Manrique*, I, 311.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 310

Arakanese king informed of "their wretched condition and begging him not to let them perish."¹ Nevertheless, the Portuguese soldiers were still holding the fort successfully against the attacking Arakanese forces. Thereafter, King Husain Shah, through an envoy, reminded Gonzales of the treaty of friendship concluded between Anaporan and the viceroy of Goa. The king further told them that he himself had been an ally of the great king of Portugal and since then he had been maintaining good relation with the Portuguese viceroy of India. If the ruler of Sandwip wanted to intervene at all, he might intervene on his behalf and not on that of the governor of Chittagong, his rebel vassal. Therefore, the ruler of Sandwip was urged to withdraw the Portuguese defensive forces from Chittagong as his action had been a clear violation of "the treaties and compacts made at Goa by his (the Arakanese king) famous great-grandfather Annaporan."²

These diplomatic dealings by the Arakanese king threw Gonzales in a confused and unfavourable situation. He replied that the Portuguese were "free people" and he could not control their free movement. However he assured the envoy that he would write to the Portuguese of Chittagong to leave the city and in case of their disagreement the king of Arakan might take necessary action even amounting to the application of force. Under no circumstances, Gonzales had anything to object.³ At this reply, the Magh envoy was satisfied and went back with a letter of Gonzales addressed to the Portuguese of Chittagong.⁴ The same envoy was then sent to the besieged Portuguese troops at Chittagong with tempting offers from the king in case of their withdrawal.⁵ But the Portuguese refused to desert the prince and resolved to fight to the last.

¹ *Ibid.* This is another instance of Portuguese treachery.

² *Ibid.*, p. 311

³ *Ibid.*,

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 312

Thereupon King Husain found no alternative except to intensify the siege. The besieged, now being despondent, could not withstand the enemy. The prince then himself took the field of action and tried his most to set an example by showing personal bravery. But suddenly hit by a musket ball from the enemy side, the prince was obliged to retire. With his fall the desperate resistance of the besieged forces came to an end. He, along with his family was removed to Sandwip only to breath his last. "Before he left, he summoned the Portuguese leaders and made them a short speech, full of praise and friendliness."¹ On the authority of our traveller, it is known that his son and daughter were allowed "to drink the purest milk of the Catholic faith."

After gaining possession of Chittagong by defeating his rebel brother, the Arakanese king turned toward his old enemy, the Portuguese. The chief stronghold of the Portuguese privateers at that time, was Sandwip. Here Gonzales and Domingo Carvalho jointly organized a sort of administration independent of the control of the government of Goa. Husain Shah now laid siege to the island. Finding no hope of survival, Gonzales submitted to the authority of Goa and appealed to the viceroy to save him from sure annihilation. He urged the viceroy to send an expedition as early as possible to make reprisals on Arakan proper. He might have thought that the proposed invasion would compel the Arakanese king to raise the siege of the island. A Portuguese fleet was accordingly sent from Goa under the command of Francis de Menezes Roxo. On the approach of the Portuguese fleet, the Arakanese siege of the island of Sandwip was possibly withdrawn. On the third October, 1615 A D, de Menezes Roxo invaded Arakan and in the next month Gonzales joined him with fifty sails. In the meantime, King Husain made request for the Dutch help in fighting against the Portuguese and this was readily responded to. The combined fleet gave a stubborn resistance to the Portuguese. When de Menezes Roxo, the Portuguese captain

¹ *Ibid.*

was killed in action, the invaders were thrown into confusion and fled.¹ This joint operation of the Arakanese and the Dutch was a death blow to the already declining Portuguese power in this region. Henceforward, they could never think of curving an independent principality anywhere in Bengal and Arakan.

The reduction of the Portuguese to submission had a far reaching effect on the history of this region. Husain Shah now employed them in his service. Henceforth, the Portuguese instead of being his enemy, became his 'obedient instruments'.² The Arakanese king granted them lands to settle in Chittagong, especially in the principality of Chakrasala, giving them much autonomy in their own affairs. Husain Shah was fully aware of the strategic importance of Chittagong and he left to the Portuguese to guard it from the possible Mughal attack on it. The Portuguese turned freebooters under the aegis of the Arakanese. The Arakanese pirates joined the Portuguese privateers and the combined marauders as a terror on the rivermouths and in the coastal districts of Bengal, inflicted their full fury on the thousands of innocent people of Bengal for the next half a century, which earned for them lasting but infamous name in the medieval history of the subcontinent.

The Mughals as successors to the Afghans, claimed the right of control over Chittagong immediately after their occupation of Gaud. This was the reason behind the inclusion of Chittagong in the Mughal land roll as one of the sarkars under the suba Bangala.³ In his *Tuzuk*, Jahangir mentions Chittagong as the easternmost district of the Bengal province.⁴ From the accounts of Fr Manrique, we come to know that "the Great Mogol (Emperor Jahangir) intends, as his predecessors had proposed" before

¹ J A S B, N S, XVIII (1922), 47

² Sarker, *Aurangzib*, III, 223

³ *Ain*, II, 130

⁴ *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, trans. Alexander Rogers, ed. Henry Beveridge, New Delhi, 1968 p. 207

him, to conquer them (Chatigan and Assam) and thus become possessed of the White Elephant."¹ Talish also gives evidence in support of this fact. He writes: "In the records of the qanungo department, Chatgaon was entered ... as one of the defaulting, unsettled (districts)."² He further writes: "When the mutasaddis of Bengal did not really wish to pay anyman whose salary was due, they gave him an assignment on the revenue of Chatgaon."³ All these evidences prove that the Mughals claimed the right of ruling over Chittagong which, in fact, was being ruled by the Arakanese.

Fr Manrique describes two possible routes, "through which that powerful foe (the Mughals) could most easily enter ' Chittagong. "These roads lead from the landward side through the principalities of Tipara and Assaram upto the city of Chatigan."⁴ Of the sea route the traveller writes: "By sea also entry is very easy. The enemy can sail with his fleet from the city of Daack (Dhaka), or from one of the dry ports in the principality of Bulva, and thus passing down the Ganges can, in six or eight days, easily reach the island of Sogoldiva. Here, taking to the open sea and crossing the gulf of Sundiva (Sandwip), about three leagues across they reach the port of Patanga (Patenga), lying upon a wide, swift river (the Karnaphuli). Then leaving the city of Deanga on the right they can appear before Chatigan."⁵ The land route was utilised by the Mughals under Jahangir's rule in their unsuccessful attempts to conquer Chittagong. But on a subsequent occasion both land and sea routes were jointly used by the Mughals in their successful invasion in Chittagong in 1666 A D.

¹ *Manrique*, I 283

² *Fathya*, p, 182

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Manrique*, I, 283

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 284-285

During Islam Khan's governorship (1608-1613 A D), the capital of Bengal was transferred from Rajmahal to Dhaka. While the Mughal governors were building Dhaka as their seat of administration, the Arakanese were pushing the Mughal boundary back to Bhulua. In fact, the wide river Meghna failed to prevent the two enemies from attacking the territories of each other. The *Baharistan* gives references to the Arakanese raids on the Mughal territory. In the very beginning of his governorship, Islam Khan made up his mind to extirpate the Arakanese invaders and the Portuguese pirates by occupying Chittagong. According to a Portuguese correspondence, the Mughal government "determined to march upon Chatigao and pass into Arracao."¹ But Islam Khan's brief and extremely busy period of viceroyalty did not allow him to see his plan come to a successful execution.

In the very beginning of Qasim Khan's governorship (1613-17 A D), the Arakanese raid on the Mughal territory was intensified. Referring to such an occasion, the *Baharistan* states that the Arakanese king "marched to Bhalwa (Bhulua) from Arkhank (Arakan) with a large force consisting of a fleet, artillery, elephants, cavalry and infantry."² The Mughal defence was broken and Abdul Wahid, the Mughal thanadar of Bhulua abandoned the fort of Bhulua without a battle and fell back.³ The Arakanese, thereupon, plundered Bhulua and the Raja of the Mags, "without stopping at that place pursued Abdul Wahid in the same manner and allowed him no time to breathe till he reached the Dakatiya Khal."⁴ To cope with this danger the proposed Assam expedition had to be diverted toward the kingdom of Arakan. Besides, an army of 2000 horse, 4000 expert matchlockmen from governor's

¹ 'Bishop Dom Pedro's letter to the viceroy of Goa, dt March 19, 1612,' qt Rev. H Hosten, *J A S B*, NS, IX (1913), 438

² *Baharistan*, I, 329

³ *Ibid.*, p. 333

⁴ *Ibid.*

own contingents were dispatched under the chief command of his son Shaykh Farid who was to be assisted by Abdun Nabi. At this time, the Portuguese pirates under the command of the nephew of Durmish Carvalho (? Domingo Carvalho) attacked the Arakanese navy and plundered it. The Portuguese attack on the Arakanese navy inspired the Mughals. Being desirous of achieving success they attacked the enemy garrisons and drove them to the south bank of the Feni.

In the next rainy season, the Arakanese army again appeared near Bhulua and plundered the Mughal territory. But it was repulsed at a great cost. The success of the Mughal army stimulated them to enter into the Arakanese territory. Qasim Khan cancelled all other projects of expedition and directed his energy and resources to the conquest of Arakan. "As it had been repeatedly ordered by the temporal and spiritual sovereign to conquer Rakhang (Arakan) to seize the white elephant and to send it to the sublime court," he thought he "should now direct his attention to the conquest of the country of the Mugs."¹ With this object in view, Qasim Khan called a council of war consisting of the officers of the army to discuss the plan of invasion. In the course of discussion, one of the generals named Mukhlis Khan, politely warned the governor that "if the invasion of Rakhang results like the invasion of Assam, it is not adviseable to proceed from Jahangirnagar,"² He, however, advised the governor to lead the campaign personally if it was to be undertaken at all. This advice was approved by all including the governor himself.

On an auspicious hour, Qasim Khan launched his campaign in the early part of the year 1616 A D. He personally proceeded upto Bhulua in successive marches, and encamped there.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 404

² *Ibid.*

Then he deputed Abdun Nabi¹ giving him the command of a large army consisting of more than 5000 cavalry, 5000 musketeers 200 war elephants and a fleet of 1000 war boats toward Chittagong. The name of other generals who accompanied him in the march are given in the *Baharistan* as follows: Sarhad Khan, Shaykh Kamal, Mirza Nuruddia, Mirza Isfandiyar, Shaykh Umari, Tatar Khan Mewati, Shaykh Qutub, Shaykh Qasim, Shaykh Afzal, Mirza Saqi, Jamal Khan (brother-in-law of Qasim Khan), Dewan Khan, Mirza Beg, Ima Khan, Tufan Bahadur, and others. Qasim Khan remained in the rear with the rest of the army "in order to encourage the army of the vanguard and kept himself informed of the nook and corner."

The news of marching of the Mughal troops toward Chittagong reached the ears of Husain Shah without much delay. He promptly got himself ready by mobilizing his forces. He had already kept Chittagong 'strongly fortified' and he "fully equipped" the fort with arms and ammunition. To resist the Mughal army he hurriedly sent his commander, called 'Kuramgiri' (Karamkari, a high ranking Arakanese military officer) by the author of the *Baharistan*, with a large army consisting of one lack infantry, one thousand war boats and four hundred elephants to Kathghar.² King Husain personally followed him with a more strong army numbering three lacks

¹ Fr Manrique informs us that Abdul Nabi (Abdun Nabi), "the Nababo Viceroy of Daack" engaged in intrigue with the Portuguese of Chittagong (in 1619 A D) against the Arakanese king. The Nawab, "swore in his king's name, to grant them (the Portuguese) whatever 'mainas', or monthly pay they desired." He also asked the Portuguese inhabitants of his territory "to write and ask them (of Arakan) to come over." (*Manrique*, I, 146). But the conspiracy, according to our traveller leaked out.

² Dr Borah rightly makes Kathghar of the *Baharistan* identical with Kathghar in Sitakunda u. z. near Barabkunda r s.

infantry, ten thousand cavalry and "innumerable boats and elephants,...to strengthen the defence of the fort of Chittagong."¹ The advanced army under Karamkari engaged itself to build a military base and a first line of defence in Kathghar.

Nevertheless, an early attack on the Arakanese army was suggested on these considerations that the building of the Arakanese fort at Kathghar had not been yet completed. The Mughals were informed that the garrison in the fort of Chittagong was quite inadequate and that the Arakanese king had not yet arrived at Chittagong with his forces. So, this was the proper time to clear the route of the Arakanese obstructions.

Sarhad Khan and Shaykh Kamal, the two Mughal generals who claimed themselves familiar with the clime, reached Kathghar through a different route² without giving information to their commander in chief. Immediately after their arrival, they delivered a vigorous assault on the unfinished fort at daybreak. "The inmates of the fort bravely defended the fort" and greeted the Mughal attack with a heavy shower of shells, bullets, arrows, grenades, and stones from ballistas and slings within the fort. The casualties on both sides were heavy. The position of the Mughals in this engagement was somewhat better, as "the victory was about to be achieved" by them. But some generals headed by Sarhad Khan, suddenly called on a halt on the plea of approaching night and advised Abdun Nabi to retire to their camp to take rest for the night. They further proposed that they would resume their attack next morning. The commander-in-chief agreed to this.

The intervening night gave a good chance to the Arakanese to strengthen their defence. Next morning the Mughals resumed their attack on the Arakanese fort. The Mughal charge continued till midday but they failed in capturing the fort. At last they

¹ *Baharistan*, I, 406

² Probably, the invading forces made their route through Fatikchhari-Hathazari area.

decided to besiege the fort on all sides. This plan, too, did not work well as the high and stiff Sitakunda Hills were protecting the fort from its eastern side.

Kuramgiri, commander of the Arakanese forces, in the meantime, succeeded in isolating the advancing Mughal army and in cutting its food supply. The rear army under Sarhad Khan and Shaykh Kamal was entrusted with the task of supplying rationing to the main body which was then laying siege to the Arakanese fort. The Arakanese, in the meantime, succeeded in raising a stockade between the two Mughal lines of arms and Sarhad Khan and Shaykh Kamal did practically nothing to restrain the Arakanese from building their base. The advancing army under Abdun Nabi now fell in great difficulties for want of provisions. Thus the besieging army found itself besieged by the enemy. The commander, in great dissatisfaction, asked Sarhad Khan and Shaykh Kamal why the Arakanese stockade which was offering such a handicap to the food supply, was not yet demolished. At this the two generals insolently replied: "As you are unable to occupy the fort of Kathghar, we are unable in a similar way to break this stockade."¹ At this reply the Mughal officers gave way to despair. The food supply fell short. The rainy season, which was a terror to the Mughal army was not far off. All these considerations, according to the author of the *Baharistan*, compelled the Mughals to withdraw the siege of the Arakanese fort and to fall back. They were soon chased by the Arakanese who had come out of the fort and took offensive operations against the retreating Mughals. In order to prevent gunpowder from falling into the hands of the enemy, the Mughals destroyed about five hundred maunds of it. The temporary occupation of Nizampur Pargana by the Mughals was the only outcome of the Mughal invasion of Chittagong. The 'zamindar of Nizampur' "accepted vassalage and come to see Abdun Nabi."

¹ *Baharistan*, I, 408

Thus the Mughal attempt to take possession of Chittagong ended in a complete failure. The plan of invasion had come out of the immature brain of Qasim Khan, foster brother of Jahangir. This incompetent viceroy did learn nothing from the successive reverses in his Cachar and Assam Campaigns. It is also a fact that the military prestige of the Mughals had sunk low during the reign of Jahangir who did inherit nothing from his warrior father. The invading Mughal army was lacking in discipline and unity of action. The incompetent Qasim Khan selected Abdun Nabi, an equally incompetent man as a commander who in the words of the author of the *Baharistan*, "was an inexperienced man" and who "could not read through their (Sarhad Khan and Shayk Kamal) plea through his simplicity."¹ The disgraceful disunity among the Mughal generals contributed greatly to the failure of the invasion. From the very beginning, the two generals, Sarhad Khan and Shaykh Kamal were discontented with the appointment of Abdun Nabi as commander of the expeditionary forces. and they disregarded the orders of their authorities to whatever extent possible. They boasted that as the route to Chittagong was well known to them, they were the fittest persons to command the campaign. While condemning the disgraceful role of the two generals the author of the *Baharistan* writes: 'From the beginning of affairs, Sarhad Khan and Shykh Kamal had been adept in hypocrisy and they were displeased on being made the followers of the afore-said (Abdun Nabi)."² The author then particularly blames Sarhad Khan for the failure, who "always behaved like traders, and cowards and cared only for his profit in cash."³ The two generals not only remained inactive in the critical hours, especially, when the said Arakanese fort was being built, but discouraged the troops whenever possible. In fact, they were largely responsible for the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 407

² *Ibid.*, p. 406

³ *Ibid.*, p. 387

failure of the Mughal army in capturing the Arakanese fort at Kathgarh.

Besides, the Arakanese were noted for their jungle fighting. Long hill ranges, covered with jungles and intersected by innumerable streams, characterize the topography of Chittagong-Arakan region. As both Chittagong and Arakan geographically belong to the same unit, the Arakanese felt quite at home in fighting the aggressors. This geographical advantage undoubtedly gave the Arakanese better position.

Yet there was another attempt of the Mughals under Ibrahim Khan (Fath-i-jang, 1617-1624 A D, brother of Nur Jahan), to conquer Chittagong. Mirza Nathan, Fr Manrique, and Shihabuddin Talish are the chief sources of information concerning this event. Shihabuddin Talish writes that the subahdar "resolved to conquer Chatgaon and destroy the wicked Maghs."¹ The subahdar had made preparations for the expedition especially in regard to the storage of provisions in Bhulua and Jugdea, two years before the proposed expedition took place.² According to Manrique, the Nawab engaged in a conspiracy with the Portuguese. Manrique, while speaking to the Arakanese king of the Mughal conspiracy to overthrow the Arakanese rule, says: "(The Nawab in 1623 A D) tried to win over the Portuguese residents in your kingdom. He (the Nawab) sent them (the Portuguese) farmans or decrees sealed by his sovereign in which those Portuguese were offered, under his Royal promise, most advantageous terms, which I will say no more about since they must still be fresh in the memories of many of your ministers."³ The traveller informs that the conspiracy failed in achieving anything owing to the loyalty of the Portuguese to the Arakanese king.

¹ *Fathya*, p. 183

² *Ibid.*, p. 198

³ *Manrique*, I, 147

The new viceroy was courageous no doubt, but he lacked adequate knowledge necessary for undertaking of such a difficult task. He launched his campaign during the rainy season the consequences of which might have been underestimated by him. Mirza Nathan, who was one of the members of the governor's war council, had requested the governor to be fully aware of 'the condition of the weather of this region', before he undertook the task. The Nawab refused to take notice of the counsel of the veteran. He abandoned the conventional route and took a new route through "the country of Acharang"¹ to Chittagong. This route was once used by the Tripura kings during their invasions.² It is not known why he had selected this route. Possibly the Nawab wanted to conduct a surprise attack on the fort of Chittagong, hence he avoided the common route. This route used by him was, perhaps, the riverain tract following the zigzag course of the Asalong Tributary in Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The invading army consisted of two thousand war boats, forty thousand horse and foot and one thousand elephant. The Nawab personally commanded the army and proceeded under the guidance of Mirza Nurullah, thanadar of Udaipur, capital of Tripura. "Having crossed both the rivers of Feni (the Big Feni and the Little Feni) he proceeded through a jungly route which was impassable even for an ant. Throughout the way not only others but even the Khan himself cleared jungles with his own

¹ 'The country of Acharang' mentioned in the *Baharistan* is confused by Dr Borah to be Arakan. Acharang, which is now only a territorial section of dense forest and hilly terrain, is mentioned in the *Rajamala* in connexion with the events that took place as early as the 14th century. (*Rajamala*, I, 240). This territory consisted of the valley of the Asalong Tributary and was under the Tripuras in most time of its history. Later on, the Arakanese supremacy was established over it along with Chittagong in the later part of the 16th century.

² *Baharistan*, I, 632

hands."¹ But soon it was found impossible for the boatmen to proceed farther owing probably to the narrow, swift and extremely zigzag course of the river. Ibrahim Khan, however, did not yield to such adverse circumstances. He took a small gondola for him and made his way through great difficulty. The horses could not be taken farther. Elephants, the only hope in such a terrain were making their way with great effort. By this time, the most formidable danger threatened the Khan. This was the shortage of provisions for army and it was growing more acute as they were making progress. Moreover, it was difficult to procure rations in such a thinly populated and a badly communicated clime. All these hostile circumstances compelled the Khan to abandon his miscalculated military operations and to give up his hope to have the laurels of victory.

The unsuccessful Mughal attempts to conquer Chittagong produced adverse impression on the politics and psychology of the countries concerned. It exposed the inherent weakness of the Mughal army which henceforward ceased to excite fear of the Arakanese. Throughout the Arakanese regime in Chittagong, the Arakanese in collaboration with the Portuguese pirates carried on their almost unopposed depredations in the Mughal territory. The Mughals got an exaggerated idea that Arakan was an impregnable country, its fleet was invincible, and its forces could not be overwhelmed. Talish's description² of the military strength of the Arakanese may magnify the actual thing but it reflects the exaggerated fear of the Mughals for the Arakanese military forces.

With swift revercraft, the Magh Firingi pirates could ravage the coastal districts and even farther interior part of the country without meeting any resistance from the local Mughal officers, who would flee away even at the sight of a few boats of the

¹ *Ibid.*

² Talish writes: "Their cannon are beyond numbering, their flotilla (nawara) exceeds the waves of the sea (in number)," *Fathya*, pp. 179-180

pirates. This unobstructed activities of the pirates made them bold enough to plunder the town of Dhaka itself on several occasions. One Mughal viceroy retired to Rajmahal in fear of the pirates leaving the defence of Dhaka to his subordinates. We have it on the authority of the contemporary writers that a great portion of Lower Bengal and other places were subjected to ravages of Mugh Firingi pirates who carried on their plundering activities more destructively than before,

The Mughal invasions of Chittagong produced effects upon the frontier policy of the Arakanese government. From this time, the Arakanese rulers began to depend on Nature as well as the foreigners for the defence of the northern part of the kingdom. The whole area of northern Chittagong between the coast and the hill ranges was deliberately depopulated and it was allowed to be covered with forest growth so as to resist the possible Mughal land invasion with the help of Nature. Secondly, the port town of Diang was assigned to the Portuguese in exchange of their promised help against the Mughal sea invasion. This helped the Portuguese in making Diang their chief place of settlement and a base of piratical activities,

Husain Shah "proved to be the greatest and most successful conqueror"¹ among the Arakanese kings. He subdued the rebels in his kingdom, crippled the power of the Portuguese, defied the attacks of world conquering Mughal army," baffled the aggressive designs of the Burmans and added new territories to his kingdom.

Thiri Thudhamma or Solim Shah II (1622-1638 A D)

Meng Khamaung or Husain Shah was succeeded by his son Thiri Thudhamma (Sans. Sri Sudharma) or Solim Shah II in 1622 A D. The second son of the king was appointed governor of

¹ H B, II, 243

Chittagong.¹ As Chittagong was the most important province both in strategy and in resources, it was a custom that governorship should belong to the second son of the king. Unfortunately, the prince died at an early age. On the death of the prince, the king appointed "a Magh grandee," (an Arakanese nobleman) governor of Chittagong. Manrique does not mention him by name but says that this nobleman "had tried his utmost to obtain this" governorship, simply in order to be revenged on the Portuguese, whom he hated intensely."² Manrique finds out the cause of his hatred of the Portuguese. The governor had fought against the Portuguese and was taken prisoner by them during the time of Philip de Brito.³

According to Manrique, the governor of Ramu was 'Pomaja' (Arakanese title of nobility), whose influence was made useful by the traveller in the Arakanese court. Manrique praises him as "an enlightened ruler and great friend of the Portuguese."⁴ The traveller during his sojourn in Ramu (July 6, 1630 A D) was received by him "with every show of courtesy and kindness."⁵

Whatever feelings the governor of Chittagong might bear in his mind for the Portuguese people, he treated them with kindness and courtesy. Immediately after his appointment as governor

¹ Manrique, I, 88

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* In another place of his account (p. 121) the traveller refers to "the hereditary dislike which the governor of Chittagong entertained for the Portuguese", which may mean the same sentiment of the father of the governor against the Portuguese. This stimulates doubt that the present governor might be a son of Sinabadi, the Arakanese governor of Chittagong, who died in 1603 A D while fighting against the Portuguese.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 95

⁵ *Ibid.*

of Chittagong in 1628-29 A D, he invited all the leading Portuguese of Chittagong and Diang to a ceremonious meeting. The delegates were all received with full state honour. The governor sent his elephant corps and his own band of musicians to receive them "at the entrance to the City." In a brief speech in the meeting where Manrique was present, the governor "expressed the hope that with the help of God and the assistance of the Portuguese he would gain great victories over the enemy (the Mughals) and thus obtain the approbation of his King and Master."¹ At the conclusion of the speech the guests were served with "a magnificent feast, which lasted most of the night, accompanying it with every indication of pleasure and good will."² The occasion was rounded off with a show of performances of dancing party and similar entertainments. The guests thus entertained, returned to Diang being "much pleased" at this ceremonious reception.

Unfortunately, our traveller found nothing but "evil intentions" of the governor behind this gesture of friendship. He frankly expresses his suspicion of the sincerity of the governor and made the latter "outwardly professing his great pleasure at meeting" the Portuguese. Manrique then brings serious charges against the governor who "at once began to intrigue so as to destroy the Portuguese, thereby both satisfying his desire for vengeance as well as enabling himself the more easily to usurp the Principality of Chatigan."³ Had the governor any such "evil intention" against the Portuguese he would not have let an opportunity slip off making the leading Portuguese captains captives at the hours of the banquet. A careful examination of the subsequent events, related by the traveller himself will disclose nothing but the malicious intention of our traveller himself.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 89

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

Taking the advantage of the former governor's kindly feeling to the Portuguese, the latter in collaboration with the Bengalee residents of Chakrasala were making an underhand plotting with the Mughal governor of Dhaka to overthrow the Arakanese rule in Chittagong. The governor of Dhaka welcomed this secret plot believing that this would give him an opportunity of seizing Chittagong. A general discontentment was possibly prevailing among the captive residents of Chakrasala against the alien masters. So there was nothing unusual for them to write to the Mughal governor at Dhaka, begging his active help in case of their uprising. The governor of Dhaka who must have gladly received this appeal, assured them of his material support. He also promised that "he would remain for the whole month of August in the port of Patenga, with an adequate fleet."¹ The Portuguese to whom treachery was a common affair might actively be organizing the revolt. Accidentally or by some secret means, the governor of Chittagong seized these letters beforehand and sent these to the king of Arakan as evidence of joint Portuguese and Bengalee intrigue against the Arakanese government. In Manrique's version, those letters were fraudulently written by the governor himself as a means to satisfy his ill intention against the Portuguese. Manrique already had charged the governor of his evil design of usurpation of "the Principality of Chatigan." Manrique's unjust fabrication can be refuted on this ground that if the governor had any such design in his mind then he would not alienate the Portuguese; on the contrary, he would sue for their alliance in materializing his plan as some of his predecessors had done. Secondly, if he had such intentions then why did he request the Arakanese king to send reinforcement to Chittagong as early as possible to meet hostile elements?

The prayer of the governor² was readily responded to, and "without loss of time" the king ordered the Corangiri (Keramkeri)

¹ *Manrique*, I, 90

² The letter written by the governor of Chittagong to the Arakanese king reached the court at the end of May, 1630 A.D.

"to prepare five hundred galias and forty galleys, and then repair with all speed to the port of Dianga."¹ The captain was also instructed to conduct a surprise attack on the Portuguese to make them prisoners. In case of the failure of a naval seizure, the Karamkari was instructed to "besiege them (the Portuguese) with as large a force as he could raise, placing the navy in charge of the governor of Ramu." Meanwhile, the Portuguese residents of Arakan proper hurriedly sent messengers to Chittagong (June 19, 1630 A D) to warn their countrymen therein of the impending danger.² The messengers arrived at Diang on June 30th. Manrique who was then preaching in the Portuguese church at Diang was reported of it. Most of the Portuguese sailors were then out at sea for making plundering raid on the south coast of Bengal. Bartolome Gonzales Tibao, one of the principal Portuguese leaders and who was staying at Diang as guardian of the Portuguese inhabitants, hurriedly came to the church to seek advice from Manrique how to prevent the Arakanese encroachment. The two leaders called for three other Portuguese, "who were very experienced and knew the country well" to come to the emergency meeting to find a way out. The leaders after a course of discussion decided that Manrique should lead a mission to the court of Arakan to allay the king and restrain him from seizing the Portuguese settlements. On July 2nd, 1630 A D, Manrique undertook his memorable journey from Diang to Arakan. The mission was successful; the king of Arakan sent orders recalling the Karamkari, who in the meantime, "with fifty Galias and sixty Galleys, awaiting a favourable moment to leave for Dianga, in order to carry out the king's orders."³ Not only that, the king promised before Manrique that he would "remove" the governor from his "service" and would appoint "an upright man

¹ Manrique, I, 90

² The Portuguese messenger reached either Chittagong or Diang not Arakan proper as the editors of the *Travels* think.

³ Manrique, I, 115

in Chatigan.¹ Manrique does not say whether the assurance given to him by the king was carried into effect or not. The Portuguese of Chittagong thus were saved from a terrible end. Probably, Manek Rai or Mangat Rai, a younger brother of the king succeeded to the governorship of Chittagong.

The *Baharistan* refers to an event that has a relation to the political history of Chittagong during Thiri Thudhamma's reign. The rebel prince Shah Jahan stayed for a short while at Jahangir-nagar in the first week of May, 1624 A D. During that time he received a mission from the king of Arakan with rare gifts worth Rupees 100,000 as pishkash "and with great humility he made a representation that he should be considered as loyal vassal and he swore by God, the great that he would serve loyally whenever he would be summoned for any work."² In return, the prince "sent a valuable dress of honour along with many precious gifts to the Raja of the Mags and a temporary forman was issued confirming the sovereignty of his territory and asked him to be firm in his words and to attain eternal glory by helping the state officers at Jahangirnagar."³ The king's method of submission and the style of expressing himself have obviously been exaggerated by the author and these should not be taken literally. Nevertheless, the possibility of sending of a mission and the resultant mutual agreement between the rebel prince and the Arakanese king cannot be ruled out. It has already been observed that there were successive attempts during the reign of Jahangir to conquer Chittagong and the threat was still looming large. So, it was the diplomatic dealings on the part of the Arakanese king to sue for an alliance with the rebel prince against his father. The desired object was gained. The prince not only gave up his claim over Chittagong but acknowledged "the sovereignty of

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 155

² *Baharistan*, I, 710-711

³ *Ibid.*

his (the Arakanese) territory." The prince required the Arakanese king to be true to his word and expected that the Arakanese king would help the prince if necessary, in gaining the throne of Delhi. It should be noted that the agreement was never dishonoured by the prince even when he became an emperor. No attempt was undertaken by him throughout his reign to recapture Chittagong from the Arakanese. The Arakanese king in his part honoured the treaty as he abstained from sending any warlike enterprises in the Mughal territory during the reign of Emperor Shah Jahan, though the practice of piracy upon the coastal areas continued unabated.

During Thiri Thudhamma's reign a terrible famine visited Arakan in 1631-35 A D¹ and Chittagong was also affected by it. The price shot up three or four times of the normal price. The famine was due to crop failures for the past successive years.

Peter Mundy, while narrating his visit to India in 1632 A D, writes: "Satgame (Chatgaon) formerly belonging to the Mogoll, but now under the king of Arakan."² The statement thus testifies to the continued Arakanese lordship over Chittagong.

Menge Tsa-ni (1638 A D), Narpadigyi (1638-'45 A D) Thado Minter (1645-52 A D), and Tsanda Thudhamma (1652-'84 A D)

King Thiri Thudhamma was succeeded by his son Meng Tsa-ni. The unfortunate prince ruled for a brief period of twenty eight days only. He was murdered by Narpadigyi,³ the dowager queen's lover, who now occupied the throne.

¹ 'The Dagb register', qt *J Bur. R S*, 50th Ann. Publ. No. 2, 1960 p. 81

² *The Travels of Peter Mundy*, vol. ii, Hakluyt Society, p. 152

³ He was the great grandson of Tha-tsa-ta, a former ruler of Arakan (1525-1531 A D)

Manek Rai or Mangat Rai, the murdered Raja's paternal uncle was the governor of Chittagong at that time. He did not recognize the usurper a king and declared independence in his territory. He was, however, defeated and was forced to flee to Dhaka, where he prayed for the asylum of Islam Khan. The fugitive governor acknowledged himself the vassal of the Mughal emperor and handed over Chittagong, though nominally to the Mughal governor of Bengal.¹ The submission of Manek Rai, 'the Magh Raja' of Chittagong has also been mentioned by the contemporary historian Abdul Hamid Lahori.² Taking advantage of the confusion, following the palace revolution in Arakan, over ten thousand people of Bengal who had been held in slavery there by the Firingis, escaped to their homeland,³ King Narapadigyi was succeeded by his nephew Thado Min-tar in 1645 A D. His exclusive dependence upon the Portuguese for the defence of Chittagong turned the port town virtually to a haunt of the Portuguese freebooters.

Thado Min-tar was succeeded by his son Tsanda Thudhamma (Chandra Sudharma) "one of the most enlightened kings of the Mrauk-U dynasty",⁴ and the last Arakanese sovereign of Chittagong. At the time of the Mughal invasion (1666 A D), the governor of Chittagong, according to Talish, was the Arakanese king's uncle's son. The governor of Ramu, according to the *Alamgir-namah*, was a brother of the Arakanese king and was named as Rawli.⁵

During the rule of Tsanda Thudhamma, Chittagong became a

⁴ Charles Stewart, *History of Bengal*, p. 277; also Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 158

² E D, VII, 66

³ H B, II, 331

⁴ Maung San Shwe Bu, 'The Report of the Super-intendent', *Archaeological Survey, Burma*, (1921), Rangoon, p. 37. In the opinion of D G E Hall, he was "one of the best of the Arakanese monarchs". (*op. cit.*, p. 398)

⁵ *Studies*, p. 212

place of refuge for two royal exiles. One was Govinda Manikya, the Tripura king, who being driven out by a usurper, took refuge along with his younger brother in Chittagong.¹ Afterwards, he proceeded toward the Arakanese capital, where he lived for sometime till Shuja's tragic end.

The other exile was Prince Shuja, who being driven out by Aurangzib's army, came to Chittagong on his way to the Arakanese capital. His presence at the Arakanese capital created troubles in which Govinda Manikya was suspected to have some connexion. Shuja suffered a tragic end at the hands of the Arakanese and Govinda Manikya was obliged to go back to his native country. On his return journey the prince came to Chittagong where he heard the news of the usurper's death. Thereupon, Govinda Manikya was restored to his throne. In gratitude the Tripura king built the temple of Chandranatha and excavated a dighi near it.

According to Gautier Schouten, a medical officer serving the Dutch East India Company, the flight of Shah Shuja from Bengal to Arakan was followed by the Mughal inroad into the seaport of Diang. Gautier Schouten reports:

At this same time, it happened that the famous general Emir Jembla, named Nawab after having reduced the affairs of Chassusa (Shah Shuja) had plans to follow the prince as far as he could, and he sent ahead with a numerous army as far as the village of Dianga on the border of the realm of Arakan with plans to enter with fire and sword. The news had alarmed the entire countryside, especially, in the area near the warboats. One saw everywhere people who were fleeing with their families and their efforts in order to save

¹ চট্টগ্রাম চলিলেক সেই ত রাজন।
জগন্নাথ অনুজ সঙ্গে চলে সেইক্ষণে।। —Rajamala, Chhatramanikya
Khande, p. 276

themselves in the capital city.¹

The Arakanese king, in order to rebuff the possible Mughal attack on Chittagong adopted adequate defence measures. Schouten writes:

In order to quickly arrange the defence, the king despatched his emissaries in all directions to direct all the subjects who would be better able to carry weapons, and in this way he quickly assembled a strong army. One sees also a large number of galleases, equipped for battle, called into service manned by a large number of boatmen, and mounted with cannon made of small precious pieces of gun metal, and sent on towards Dianga.²

It is not known whether any clash between the Maghs and the Mughals actually took place or not. Nevertheless, the contemporary sources refer to Mir Jumla's project of an invasion of Arakan. The plan was abandoned as a result of Mir Jumla's sudden death. The task then fell on Shaista Khan who successfully executed the plan of the Mughal invasion of Arakan.

According to the *Alamgirnamah*, Sandwip was being governed by Dilawar, "a runaway captain of the Mughal army,"³ during the Mughal assault of the island in 1665 A D. The Arakanese king dispatched a fleet to help Dilawar against the Mughals. This leads us to think that Dilawar was governing the island under the tutelage of the Arakanese king. It cannot be precisely said when Dilawar gained the possession of the island. From the account of the shipwrecked sailors of the *Tar Schelling* (1661 A D),⁴ it appears that the ruler of Sandwip was a Muslim who received them courteously. The author of the *Alamgirnamah* further writes

¹ Gautier Schouten, 'Voilage', qt M S Khan, *J A S P*, XI (1966), 221-222

² *Ibid.*

³ *A N* (Salam), p. 229n

⁴ *J A S B*, XLV (1876), 72

that Dilawar was an old man of eighty when the Mughals laid siege to his island kingdom. It may be assumed that Dilawar occupied the island before 1660 A D.

Section 2. An Outline of the Arakanese Administration in Chittagong

The source material for the historical study of the Arakanese administration in Chittagong is indeed meagre. A few incidental remarks made by foreign travellers, chroniclers and historians are the primary source of information.

The Arakanese monarchs ruled a large tract of land including Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts for nearly a century. One of them styled himself as "the highest and the most powerful king of Arakan, of Tippera, of Chacomas, and of Bengala."¹ This inflated title indicates the claim of the Arakanese rulers over a large portion of Eastern Bengal. The contemporary Bengalee poets describe the Arakanese sovereign as 'Lord of White Elephant (Dhabal Matangeswar), 'Lord of White and Red Elephant' (Dhabal Arun Gajeswar) etc.

The Arakanese province of Chittagong was subdivided into smaller administrative units, called by the foreigners as 'kingdoms' and 'principalities'. Their exact number cannot be traced. It is stated in the *Rajamala* that the Tripuras took possession of six rajyas (lit. kingdoms)² by conducting a raid on Chittagong during Sikandar Shah's reign. The same source book specifically mentions some of the 'kingdoms' (rajyas) such as Rambu, Chakaria, and Deang-Uria.³ There might have some relation between six

¹ Campos, *op. cit.*, p. 78

² *Rajamala*, III, 27

³ *Ibid.*

'shiqs' during Dhanyamanikya's reign and six 'rajyas' during Amaramanikya's reign. Mr M S Collis, a modern writer, counts up as many as twelve kingdoms into which Chittagong was divided but he does not mention them by name. He writes : Its (of Chittagong) administration was left in the hands of twelve local rajahs, who paid an annual tribute to the Arakanese king's viceroy at Chittagong."¹ Sabirid Khan, a local poet, said to be flourishing during the Arakanese regime, mentions eight prominent places (Ashtasri) namely Chatgaon, Haola, Deangir (Diang), Maishamurha, Kanchana, Mahmudpur, Hashimpur and Bajalia.² These eight divisions except Chatgaon comprise within the limits of the modern sadar-south sub division and therefore have little connexion with the twelve kingdoms of Collis's account. The European travellers frequently mention some 'kingdoms' such as kingdom of Chittagong, kingdom of Ramu, kingdom of Chakrasala, kingdom of Chakaria, kingdom of Sandwip etc. The so-called 'kingdoms' were not of uniform in size and rank. The facts indicate the pre-eminence of the two 'kingdoms', Chittagong and Ramu over others. It appears that the rulers of all these kingdoms were vested with certain amount of autonomy in their respective domains. The position of many of these rulers were hereditary.

In all respects, the viceroyalty of Chittagong was one of the most important posts in the organization of the Arakanese government. The town of Chittagong was the headquarters of the most resourceful part of the kingdom and its port was possibly the chief port of the entire kingdom. Being the capital of the frontier province, its strategic importance was counted by the sovereign with special care. "The city of Chatigan", in the opinion of Manrique, was "a place of the first importance and the master key to the whole Magh Empire."³ The Arakanese king was

¹ J Bur. R S, 50th Ann. Publ. No. 2, 1960, p. 494

² 'Vidyasundar', S P (Monsoon Number, 1364 B S), 84

³ Manrique, I, 283- 284

fully aware of it and as Shihabuddin Talish observes, "there is always some trustworthy relative or faithful clansman of the Rajah in charge of the government of Chatgan."¹ This shows that the viceroy of Chittagong held a position of high importance in the Arakanese government. It appears that a law of succession or the like was generally followed in the appointment of the governor of the province. "The principality of Chatigan", says Manrique, "belonged by hereditary right to the second son."² This kind of law of succession, however, was not followed in every case of appointment.

The occasion of the installation of an appointed governor was usually observed with 'festivities.' Referring to the duties and functions of one such governor of Chittagong, Manrique writes, "the governor immediately (after the conclusion of the installation ceremony) set to work to acquire a full knowledge of his province, and of how he could best increase its natural advantages."³ The residence of the governor was possibly situated within the fort. The besieging Mughal army found the governor within the fort.

The governor of Chittagong acted almost independently regarding the performance of administrative duties. This made him appear as a king to the foreigners. Guerreiro (1602 A D) writes that the Arakanese ruler "has set up a king (in Chittagong) under his hand."⁴ Manrique mentions him "the prince of Chatigan."⁵ Pyrard de Laval (1607 A D) thought of him (the ruler of 'Chatgan') to be "a petty king of this province or rather a governor, with

¹ *Fathya*, p. 182

² *Manrique*, I, 301

³ *Ibid.*, p. 302

⁴ *Guerreiro*, p. 185

⁵ *Manrique*, I, 88

the title of king."¹ Du Jarric confuses the governor of Chittagong for a king.² The governor was permitted to strike coins in his own name and "coins of that date (1480 A D) now exist... some being struck by the viceroys in Chittagong."³ Shihabuddin Talish also supplies evidence of issuing of coins by the governor in his own name.⁴

The Arakanese title of the post of governorship of Chittagong was not one and the same throughout the period. In an Arakanese temple inscription of 1540-41 A D, the Arakanese governor of Chittagong is designated as Chandilah Raja.⁵ According to Manrique, the holder of the governorship of Chittagong was dignified by the title of 'Longeraja'⁶ (Lokaraja viz., ruler of the people). In another place of his book, Manrique writes that king Meng Radzagyi installed his second son in the viceroyalty of Chittagong, with the title of 'Alamanja',⁷ meaning Alaman the governor.

The importance of Ramu was next only to Chittagong. Its weight in the Arakanese kingdom can be ascertained from the account of Ralph Fitch, who puts the name Ramu jointly with Recon (Arakan) while denoting the whole of the kingdom.⁸

¹ Laval, I, 326

² Campos, *op.cit.*, p. 78

³ J A S B, X (1841), 688

⁴ Fathya, p. 182

⁵ A R, II (1794), 299. The translator thought of the term to be Arakanese corrupt form of Shandilya Raja.

⁶ Manrique, I, 152

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 301

⁸ Foster, Ralph Fitch, p. 25; also see *supra*, p. 233

A missionary visiting Chittagong in 1598 A D calls it 'the kingdom of Ramu'.¹ The kingdom (rajya, desh) of Ramu is also mentioned in the *Tripura Chronicle* and some other Bengali works. The city of Ramu had a strategic importance because it served as a passage from Chittagong to Arakan. In all aspects, Ramu was an Arakanese city whereas Chittagong was a cosmopolitan one. The city was known to the Arakanese as Panwa. Manrique, while visiting Ramu in 1630 A D, writes the name of the governor as 'Pomaja'.² According to Manrique, Ramu was "the chief town in this District, and the usual seat of the Viceroy in charge".³ It appears from Manrique's account that the governor was entrusted with the performance of certain functions as the head of chancery on behalf of the king of Arakan. All kinds of revenue transaction were to be made through him. Documents permitting the foreigners an entrance to or departure from Arakan, by land had to be submitted to him for examination and "to make them valid."⁴ Manrique's observation thus point out the geographical and administrative importance of Ramu in the kingdom of Arakan.

It appears that all the subject 'kingdoms' were bound to serve their suzerain with army and navy at their disposal in case of his war with his enemy. Thus Mahapinnyagyaw, governor of Chitt-

¹ B P P, XIV (pt 2, 1917), 148

² The word 'Pomaja' originates in 'Panwa-sa', 'the eater of Panwa' (the Arakanese name of Ramu) that is its fief-holder, who took (ate) the revenues, sending a share to the king (Manrique, I, 94n). The governor was also known as Ramu-sa or the fief holder of Ramu (*Ibid.*, p, 91n). The term 'sa' meaning eater or holder is current among the tribesmen of Chittagong Hill Tracts. The revenue collector in the Magh society is known as 'Soogree' (J A S B, IV (1835), 36). This is the colloquial form of sa-gri or the great 'sa' or eater of revenue,

³ Manrique, I, 276

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 276-277

agong joined the Arakanese king in the latter's expedition to Pegu.¹ We have it on the authority of Guerreiro that the chief of Chakaria dispatched his naval commander to help the king with naval forces during his siege of Syriam (1902-03 A D).²

An important military official that had relation to the Arakanese government of Chittagong was Karamkari,³ on whom the defence of the province depended to a large extent. The Portuguese historian Bocarro defines the post as captain general by sea.⁴ The *Baharistan* refers to him as a commander of land forces.⁵ Manrique says, it was "a title corresponding to that of Captain-General of sea and land forces with us."⁶ Shihabuddin Talish defines this post as "Commandant, superintendent,"⁷ The *Rajamala* informs us that either a chieftain or a commander named 'Kurha' Maghi was appointed military governor by Sikandar Shah in the Tripura capital.⁸ This 'Kurha' Maghi is the Tripura corruption of the Magh word Karamkari. It seems that he was recruited from the Arakanese nobility. While speaking of the duration of his office, Talish writes: "Every year the Rajah of Arakan sends to Chat

¹ See *supra*, p. 240

² *Guerreiro*, p. 225

³ The spelling varies in different source books. Manrique writes Corangiri. The *Baharistan* spells it as Kurumgiri. In the *Fathya i Ibbriya* and in the *Alqmgirnamah* the word is pronounced Karamkari and Karamkabri respectively.

⁴ Cf. *Manrique*, I, 90n

⁵ *Baharistan*, I, 406

⁶ *Manrique*, I, 90

⁷ *Fathya*, p. 112

⁸ কুড়া মঘী নাম এক সদর জানি।।
তাহার সহিতে সৈন্য রাখিয়া বিস্তর।।
উদয়পুর হনে যায় সাহা সেকান্দর।।

gaon a hundred ships full of soldiers and artillery munitions, with a new Karamkari, when the former Karamkari, with the ships, of last year, returns to Arakan."¹ It was something of an annual visit of the Arakanese navy to the coastal region of the kingdom. Mahrique mentions a class of officials named 'Catagaris' (? Pers:- an khat kâr, *ختکار*) which meant 'royal scribes'²

There were a number of government or semi government officials whose titles have come down to us through such sources as mediæval literary works, placenames etc. One such post was 'roaza' which is current among the Khyoung Tha tribesmen of Chittagong Hill Tracts. It means 'the collecting agent or village head.'³ Another distinguished title was 'khnoaja.' In a mediæval Bengali puthi, it is stated that the 'king' of Chakrasala conferred this title on some of his Muslim friends.⁴ The office of khnoaja was in existence in Chittagong Hill Tracts till the eighteenth century.⁵ Another important police cum revenue post in the Arakanese administration was 'karbari' (Pers. *کارباری*) which is a very old institution and is still in vogue among the tribal societies in Chittagong Hill Tracts. An old inscription of Arakan refers to this post being in existence as early as 1494-95 A D.⁶ The power and functions of the holder of this post, cannot be precisely described. A karbari in our time is one who is entrusted with the administration of a 'para' (roughly a village or a part of it) and

¹ Fathya, p. 182

² Mahrique, I, 152

³ Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 90

⁴ Sabirid Khan, 'Vidya Sundar', *qt S P* (Monsoon Number, 1364 B S) p. 85

⁵ A R, VII (1808), 186. The term was related to the administrative and revenue collection of a 'khua', the tribesman name of a village.

⁶ J A S P, XI (1966), 123

that he will be responsible for maintenance of public order and collection of revenue there. Similar other posts were 'lambu', 'chhwang' etc. which cannot be defined satisfactorily.

Fortification was an important part of the Arakanese defence administration. Permanent fortification was established in Chittagong city during the early Muslim rule. The chief purposes of the Arakanese fort in Chittagong were to keep the defence position strong and to defend the city from potential attackers such as the Portuguese and the Mughals. The chief Arakanese fort of Chittagong according to Guerreiro, was built by Méng Radzagyi (1593-1612 A D)¹ "The fort of Chatgaon", according to the author of the *Baharistan*, "was strongly fortified and fully equipped" with arms and ammunition.² This fort can be identified with that of Talish's account. It stood just on the bank of the river Karnaphuli. According to Shihabuddin Talish, "they (the Arakanese) built a strong fort, and left a large fleet to guard it."³ He gives a graphic account of this fort:

On the bank of the Karnaphuli River are some hills, high and low, situated close to each other. The lower hills have been heaped over with earth and raised to the level of the higher ones; all these hills have been scarped cylindrically, fortified, and named the fort (of Chatgaon). In strength it rivals the rampart of Alexander, and its towers (burj) are as high as the falak ul buruj. Fancy cannot sound the depth of its moat; imagination cannot reach its niched parapet.

In the fort has been dug a deep ditch, about eight yards in breadth; on the eastern side, close to the edge of the ditch flows the river Karnaphuli.....On the north side is a large wide and deep tank (? modern Laldighi) close to the ditch. Behind the tank, along the entire north side and a part of

¹ Guerreiro, p. 185

² *Baharistan*, I, 405

³ *Fathya*, p. 183

the western side, are hills. The hills are so high and the jungle so dense, that it is impossible to traverse them even in imagination. Within the fort two springs flow, the water of which runs into the Karnaphuli River in the monsoons, when the channel of the springs becomes so broad that a *jelba* boat can easily pass through it. As the people of the fort use all the water (that issues) in seasons other than the rainy, they dam the springs and block the outlet to the Karnaphuli River. On a height within the fort is a tomb, known as the *astana* of Pir Badr. ... It is said that if one could perform the impossible feat of dragging a large gun to the top of the hill at the western corner which adjoins Tipperah, its balls would fall within the fort ...¹

In addition to the main fort, Talish writes that there was an auxiliary stockade "on the other side of the Karnaphuli." Of this fort Talish writes; "(It) is a lofty and strong fort, opposite the fort of Chatgaon; it is full of defence materials..."² The cause of building the second fort was perhaps to keep watch on the movement of the Portuguese settlers in that area. The *Baharistan* reports of the building of an Arakanese field fort in Kathghar.³ The *Alamgirnamah* states of an Arakanese fort at Ramu.⁴

According to Talish's narration, northern Chittagong during the Arakanese regime was transformed into a sort of 'no man's land.' It was the Arakanese strategy to keep this extreme northern frontier of the kingdom a desolate area, so as to resist the Mughal invasion with the help of nature. This reminds us of the practice of the ancient Romans who allowed the frontier area of the Em-

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181

² *Ibid.*, p. 181

³ *Baharistan*, I, 408

⁴ *Studies*, p. 212

pire to be covered by forests, thus making the movements of the invading forces difficult. Both *Fathya-i-ibbriya* and the *Alamgirnamah* supply evidence of the complete desolation of the northern part of the district, especially the strip of land between the sea-coast and the Sitakunda Hills. Shihabuddin Talish draws a sketch of this clime as follows:

From Jagdia, where there was a (Mughal) ou'post, to Chatgaon lay a wilderness. On the skirt of the hill was a dense jungle, without any vestige of habitation or living being . . . (The Maghs) did not leave a bird in the air or a beast on the land (from Chatgaon) to Jagdia, the frontier of Bengal, increased the desolation, thickened the jungles, destroyed the al, and closed the road so well that even the snake and the wind could not pass through¹

At what time this project of depopulation was taken in hand is difficult to ascertain. The *Baharistan* reports to us that the invading Mughal army under Qasim Khan brought the Arakanese 'Zamindar' of Nizampur Pargana (which probably comprised wholly or partly modern Mirsarai and Sitakunda u.z.s.) under its subjugation in 1616 A.D.² On the same authority, we are informed that the pargana used to send rupees six hundred as revenue to the Arakanese exchequer. The *Baharistan* also gives evidence of the existence of a highway in that area. The statement of the *Baharistan* thus tends to prove that the area till then was not devoid of settled population. It may be supposed that the repeated Mughal invasions forced the Arakanese government to take such a drastic step as desolating the whole area between the last Mughal outpost at Jagdia and the vicinity of the Chittagong town. As a result the whole population was driven out of this place and the vacated area was left to be gradually covered with jungles and bushes.

The Arakanese rulers effectively handed the defence of the northern frontier over to the Portuguese during the later reigns.

¹ *Fathya*, pp. 182-183

² *Baharistan*, I, 407

The Arakanese, believing that these people were inimical to the Muslims and fit to be frontier guards with their powerful fleet, employed them in their services. Foreign travellers give an account of this Arakanese policy of the protection of frontier with the help of the foreigners. According to Guerreiro (1600 A D), "almost all the port (of Chittagong) has been given over to the Portuguese."¹ On the authority of Manrique, "these men (the Portuguese) were in the service of the king of Arracan and defended his frontier against the encroachments and tyranny of the Great Mogol,"² Explaining the Arakanese policy, Manrique further writes:

With the object of securing these two entrances (by land and sea), the Magh kings decided to always retain Portuguese in their service, granting the best of them the rank of Captain and conferring on them Bilatas, or revenue producing lands, on the understanding that they maintained a certain force of their countrymen and also Gelias..... Besides this annual income, they were authorised to take their vessels into the principality of Bengala, which belonged to the Great Mogol.³

Bernier's account substantiate the statement of Manrique. He writes: "The king of Rakan, who lived in perpetual dread of the Mogol, kept these foreigners (the Portuguese) as a species of advanced guard, for the protection of his frontier, permitting them to occupy a seaport called Chatigon, and making them grants of land."⁴ Manucci makes a similar observation. He writes: "The king of Arakan relied much on this class (the Portuguese) and made little account of the kings his neighbours both from the bravery of the aforesaid men, also from the nature of his country."⁵ On anot-

¹ *Guerreiro*, p. 185

² *Manrique*, I, 89

³ *Ibid.*, p. 285

⁴ Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, 1656-68 A D, ed. Archibald Constable, 1972, p. 175

⁵ *Manucci*, I, 371

her occasion, he writes: "They (the Portuguese) were sheltered in Chatganw, a place granted them by the king of Arakan as a defence against the design, long entertained by the Mogul kings, of conquering that kingdom."¹ Alexander Dow writes: "(The Arakanese king) maintained at Chittagong some Portuguese banditti, as a barrier against the empire of the Moguls."² In the view of Manrique, the Portuguese fleet formed "the backbone of (Arakanese) navy."³ Giving the numerical strength of the Portuguese mercenaries in the employment of the Arakanese king, Manrique writes: "Had it not, indeed been for the seven hundred and fifty Portuguese whom the Magh ruler had in his pay, the Mogores would on both occasions (Mughal attempts to conquer Chittagong during the subahdarship of Qasim Khan and Ibrahim Khan Fath-i-jang) have seized Chatigan....."⁴ This wholesome dependence on the foreigners for the defence of the kingdom and the consequent negligence on the part of the Arakanese rulers helped to bring about disaster that their army suffered at the hands of the Mughals in 1666 A D.

It is interesting to note that the officers of Chittagong held Muslim titles during the Arakanese period. This was obviously in imitation of the practice of the Arakanese sovereigns who were accustomed to adopt Muslim names as a mark of holding possession of a part of Bengal especially Chittagong.⁵ Relying upon the Arakanese coins and chronicles, Sir A P Phayre traces the origin of this practice back to the times of king Meng Tsau mwun. He writes: "From this time (1426 A D) the coins of the Arakan kings bore on the reverse, their names and titles in the Persian character; this custom was probably first made obligatory upon them as vassals,

¹ *Ibid*, II, 117

² Alexander Dow, *The History of Hindustan*, III, 370

³ *Manrique*, I, 91

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ Phayre, *op. cit.*, p. 78; Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 390

but they afterwards continued it when they had recovered their independence and ruled the country as far as the Brahmaputra River."¹ This practice of adopting Muslim names, beside their original Arakanese and Pali ones was not confined to the Arakanese sovereigns and the Arakanese governors of Chittagong, it extended even among the governors of Ramu and the Hill chiefs. The early British revenue papers show the Chakma chiefs holding the Muslim names as late as the East India Company's rule in Chittagong. This adoption of Muslim names is an important evidence of the Muslim influence in the court and in the cultural domain of Arakan. A good number of Persian official titles have been mentioned by Manrique and other travellers. The 'Chowkidar', "who" in the view of Manrique, "correspond to our (Spanish) guards or customs officials,"² was obviously the holder of a civil post that had been in existence during the previous Muslim regimes. 'Bundicanas'³ of Manrique's account was obviously, the bandikhana or state prison house. The 'qazis' mention of whom can be found in the contemporary Bengali works were the Muslim judicial officers appointed to try the cases of the Muslim community of the kingdom. Daulat Qazi, the famous medieval Bengalee poet was one such officer in the capital city of Arakan. It is learnt from a puthi named *Vidyasundar*, written by poet Sabirid Khan, that there were seven families of qazi living in the kingdom of Chakrasala.⁴ The puthi also gives reference to such civil and revenue officials as 'muhundar' (Beng, majumdar Pers. majmu'adar), chowdhury etc.

Except the freebooters, the foreigners were generously received by the Arakanese governors and their subordinate officials at Chittagong. The accounts of Manrique, Pyrard de Laval and others have direct evidence of it. Pyrard refers to the kind behaviour of his host

¹ J A S B, XIII (1844), 46; also A P Phayre, 'The Coins of Arakan', J A S B, XV(1846), pp. 232-237

² Manrique, I, 329

³ *Ibid.*, p. 96

⁴ S P, (Monsoon Number, 1364), p. 84

at whose court he lived for a month. He writes: "on being presented to this petty king (the governor of Chittagong), he received me with great kindness, and gave me my full liberty, saying that if I would remain with him he would do great things for me: and indeed, he bade bring me raiment, and food day by day in great abundance ..."¹ Foreign missionaries were given liberty to preach their faiths. Foreign traders were invested with various commercial privileges

The Arakanese government maintained public houses along the royal roads. According to father A Farinha, a Portuguese missionary traveller, who made temporary stay in Chittagong in 1639-40 A D writes that "rest houses" were built along the royal road connecting Diang with Arakan. These 'rest houses provided the travellers with lodging and food, "free of charge", "for it would be below the king's dignity to ask for money."²

The Arakanese administration in Chittagong was on the whole beneficial to the subject people. All the Bengalee court poets of Arakan praise their sovereigns in high sounding terms for their just and beneficial rule.

Section 3. Arakanese Rulers' Patronization to the Muslim and Hindu Subjects

One of the prominent features of the socio-cultural history of Arakan in the seventeenth century was the extensive Muslim influence on a predominantly Buddhist society. This Muslim influence on the Arakanese society was not an outcome of some sudden occurrences. It was the result of an agelong intercourse between Arakan and Muslim countries that dates back to the period of Arab contact with Arakan.

¹ Laval, I, 326

² Qt Manrique, I, 173

Arakan came into contact with the Muslims as early as the ninth century A D. The *Arakanese chronicle* gives reference to the Muslim settlement in Arakan during the reign of Maha-taing Tsan-daya (788-810 A D).¹ Muslim faqirs and dervishes used to visit the Arakanese coast. One of the widely known evidences of this fact is the existence of the Muslim shrines called 'Badar Muqam' scattered along the coastline of Arakan.² These 'Badar Muqams' are essentially the commemorative shrines originally erected by the followers and devotees of Pir Badruddin Badr-i-Alam, popularly known as Pir Badr. This act of commemoration suggests that Muslim saints and sailors happened to land at the coast of Arakan as early as the fourteenth century.

The gradual Muslim infiltration into political and cultural life of Arakan became more forceful during the reign of Meng Tsau mwun who with the help of the sultan of Gaud (Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah) regained his throne.³ From this time down to the early part of the seventeenth century the rulers of Arakan adopted Muslim names and inscribed these with kalima on their coins as a mark of their suzerainty over a part of Bengal especially Chittagong. Two Persian inscriptions said to be engraved in 1494-95 A D⁴ refer to the names of a Muslim governor and his subordinate officials holding Persian titles, thus testifying to the fact of the Islamic penetration into Arakan. The Muslim subjugations of Arakan from time to time undoubtedly increased the Islamic influence in that country. The Portuguese sources give indirect evidence of the Arakanese submission to the Husain Shahi rulers.⁵ The numismatic sources state that the Pathan army of Muhammad

¹ J A S B, XIII (1844), 36

² For an analytical study of 'Badar Muqam' see the contribution of Mr Siddiq Khan in the J A S P, VII, 1962

³ J Bur. R S, XV, 34

⁴ J A S P, XI (1966), 123

⁵ See *Supra*, p. 162

Shah Ghazi entered into Arakan.¹

The Muslim population of the kingdom of Arakan (which included the Muslim predominant district of Chittagong) attained a sizeable quantity to form a society of their own. The growth of Muslim population in the kingdom of Arakan was due mainly to the bringing of a large number of captive Muslims by the Magh-Firingi pirates from Lower Bengal. The Arakanese, writes Sir A P Phayre, "appear to have sent numbers of the inhabitants into Arakan as slaves... They form about 15% of the whole population."² Bernier writes: "Although the king of Rakan be a gentile, yet there are many Mahometans mixed with the people, who have either chosen to retire among them, or have been enslaved by the Portuguese... in their expeditions to the neighbouring coasts."³ The accounts of Bernier thus prove the fact that the Muslim community of Arakan was composed of both refugee and captive Muslims. Poet Alaol writes that the contemporary Muslim society of Arakan was composed of various elements such as the Arab, Egyptian, Syrian, Turkish, Abyssinian, Rumi (Byzantian), Khorasani, Uzbeg, northern Indian, Deccanian, Assamese, Bengalee, Khotanese, Achenese,⁴ Cochinese,⁵ Central Asians and a host of other nationalities.⁶ The account of

¹ See *supra*, p. 192

² J A S B, X (1841), 681

³ Bernier, p. 111

⁴ One of the main ethnic groups in the island of Sumatra, Indonesia (vide, 'Achenese' *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., vol. i, 1975, p. 59) 'The proper Malay name of the place is Acheh. The Portuguese generally called it Achem.' *H J*, p. 3

⁵ Cochin was called by the Malays Kuchi; vide *H J*, p. 226

⁶ নানা দেশী নানা লোক শূনিয়া রোসাজ ভোগ
 আইসন্ত নৃশছায়াতল।
 আরবী, মিছরী, সামী। তুর্কী, হাবসী, রুমী,
 থোমাহুনী, উজবেগী সকল।।

the contemporary foreign travellers throw light on the Muslim settlements in Arakan. Writing in the beginning of the seventeenth century Guerreiro observes: "The Moors...would always be garibos that is very submissive, with no other desire but to live under his (king of Arakan) protection."¹ Manucci states that Shah Shuja during his stay in Arakan, "found many dwellers in Arakan, Moguls and Pathans."²

The Muslim population of Arakan consisted roughly of four categories, namely, the Bengalee, other Indian, Afro-Asian and native. Among these four categories of the Muslims the Bengalee Muslims formed the largest part of the total Muslim population of Arakan. The inflow of the captive Muslims from Lower Bengal contributed much to the ever-increasing Bengalee Muslims in the Arakanese kingdom. The Muslims were called Kolas by the Arakanese. The Arakanese Muslims introduce themselves as Rohangyas to others.³

The favour shown by the Arakanese kings and the courtiers to the Muslims led to the growth of Muslim nobility in Arakan. According to Guerreiro, a certain 'Rume' exercised considerable power over the king.⁴ The works of Daulat Qazi and Alaol give reference to a number of Muslim nobles, e.g. Lashkar Wazir Ashraf Khan, Qureshi Magan Thakur, Suleiman, Syed Musa, Syed Muhammad Khan, Navraj Majlis, Syed Shah etc. who held res-

লাহুরী, মূলতানী, সিঙ্গী, কাশ্মিরী, দক্ষিণী, হিন্দী,

কামরূপী, আর বঙ্গদেশী।

অহপাই, খোটেনগারী, কর্ণালী, মলয়াবারী,

আসি, কুচি, কনটক বসী।।

বহু শেখ, হৈরদজাদা, মোগল, পাঠান যোদ্ধা,

রাজপুত্র হিন্দু নান জাতি।

A R B S, p. 12

¹ Guerreiro, p. 195

² Manucci, I, 374

³ A R, V (1808), 237

⁴ Guerreiro, p. 195

possible posts in the Arakanese administration. Alaol's works give evidence of the patronization of the Arakanese rulers toward the learned Muslims.¹ The Muslim nobility and learned men contributed a great share to the growth of Islamic culture in Arakan.

The Muslim influence made a deep mark on the society and administration of Arakan. Poet Alaol's work refer to the participation of Muslim nobility in the coronation ritual of the Arakanese monarch. Majlish Navraj, a senior minister officially conducted the investiture ceremony of king Sanda Thudhamma. The minister formally pronounced statements regarding the solemn duties and responsibilities of a king and urged the new king to follow these. After the conclusion of the ceremony, the sworn king paid respect to the minister.² The contemporary sources state that Muslim officers like qazis, lashkar wazirs, chowkidars, karbaris etc. were frequently employed in the Arakanese government. Muslim manners and etiquettes were introduced in the court of Arakan. Manrique, while he was staying at the court of Arakan noticed that the visitors were required to pay 'taslim' (a respectful mode of salutation) before the king.³ Harvey writes: 'Doubtless it is Muhammadan influence which led to women being more secluded in Arakan than in Burma.'⁴

The Arakanese patronage to the Muslim community and the Bengali literature produced a brilliant group of Muslim writers in the seventeenth century. It is really amusing to note that the Bengali literature was being cultivated extensively in a foreign country under the patronage of alien rulers. But the most interesting of all is that being in deadly hostility with the Mughals in their

¹ বোসাঙ্গেতে মোসলমান যতেক আহেস্ত।

ভালিব অ'লিম বলি আদর কৰেস্ত।। Alaol, *Sikandar Nama*, p. 27

² *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27; also see 'Bengali influence in Arakan', *B P P*, XXXIII (1927), 139-144

³ Manrique, I, 155

⁴ *Outline of Burmese History*, p. 90

foreign relations the Arakanese monarchs at home granted the greatest privileges to the Muslims, extended patronage to the Islamic culture and gave influential support to the Muslim poets in their literary pursuits.

Arakanese patronage to the Hindus and their culture started from the very early period of its history. The Chandra rule (788-957 A D) in Arakan witnessed the overflow of Saivism and Tantricism in that country. The votive, copperplate and numismatic inscriptions¹ written in Sanskrit and dated from the fourth to the twelfth centuries A D give evidence of Aryan influence on the religious life of the Arakanese. The Hindu influence on social and religious life of Arakan became more extensive during the reign of Min Bin (1531-1553 A D). Referring to the style of buildings, constructed during his reign, Mr M S Collis remarks that "the architecture (of the temples) is neither Mohamedan nor Buddhist. It is Hindu."²

From the time of Min Bin Hindu culture began to be patronized by the Arakanese kings in an increasing degree. This spirit was exhibited in the culture of Hindu learning and literary Bengali in the court. Referring to the patronage of the Arakanese kings to the Hindu inhabitants, Sir A P Phayre writes: "In the interior (of Arakan) reside a few Brahmins,.....some are descendants of colonists from Bengal, brought by the Arakan kings. I am inclined to think, that the Arakanese monarchs were in latter times very Brahmanically inclined."³ It seems that all of the Bengalee Hindu colonists of Phayre's narration were possibly not colonists in the true sense. Many of them were kidnapped by the Magh-Firingi

¹ Cf E H Johnston, 'Some Sanskrit inscriptions of Arakan' *Bul. S O A S*, XI, 357-'85; D C Sircar, 'Inscriptions of the Chandras of Arakan', *E I*, XXXII (1957), 103-109

² *J Bur. R S*, 50th Ann. Publ., 1960, p. 494

³ *J A S B*, X (1841), 682

pirates from Lower Bengal and were forced to settle in the new land. Among them there must be some learned persons, well versed in their shastras. They were asked to demonstrate their knowledge in the royal court. Mr Forchammer points out the existence of Sanskrit learning in medieval Burma. The texts related to such subjects as astrology, astronomy, medicine, law, rhetoric and religious scriptures were preserved and cultivated by the scholars residing in the royal court. Dr Forchammer (1880 AD) writes: "There exists a real Sanskrit literature in Burma written on papers like India with Nagari and Bengali characters. These records are in the hands of the descendants of Hindu colonists who at different periods.....settled in this country." The cultivation of Sanskrit exercised influence upon the Muslim writers of Arakan and helped them in writing high flown Sanskritic Bengali.

Section 4 Legacy of the Arakanese Regime

The close contact between Chittagong and Arakan from time immemorial down to the end of the Arakanese regime, has left distinctive marks on almost every aspect of society and culture of the district. The name Marma, by which the Maghs of Chittagong Hill Tracts introduce themselves to others is derived from Myamma (or Byamma), the national name of the Burmans which is only the vocal corruption of the written name.¹ Similarly Bohmangiri (the great Bohman) and Poangiri (the great Poang), the two honorific titles of the Magh chiefs of Chittagong Hill Tracts date from the middle of the sixteenth century or earlier. The name Bowangiri occurs in an Arakanese inscription (1540-'41 A D), discovered in Chittagong.² The term Bowangiri of the inscription is the debased form of Bhagwan (suffixed to -giri or great) in

¹ Hamilton, *op. cit.*, II, 777; also, *J A S B*, XIII (1844), 24 and Emil Forchammer, *Arakan*, Rangoon, 1891

² *A R*, II (1794), 299; *J B T R S*, VII (1905), 5

Sanskrit-Prakrit vocabulary. The word Bhagwan can be attributed to any exalted personage.¹ The term Pru (variously written as Fru, Froo, Phru, Phroo and even Phyu or Phyoo ('r' being replaced by 'y' in the early British revenue papers), a respectable title, held by the members of the ruling family of the Maghs of Chittagong Hill Tracts has its origin in Phra, a corrupt form of Sanskrit-Prakrit term Prabhu, meaning a Lord or Master.² The term may have relation to 'Pha', the Tripura title once held by their kings. **Mong**, a title prefixed to the name of man of high rank or birth (corresponding to sir in English and monseigneur in French) originates in the Central Asian Mongol term mong, implying exalted position.³ This derivation may also be applicable to the title maung by which the present day Hill chief of Ramgarh is known.

People of the Arakanese extract form the chief elements of society in Ramgarh. Bandarban and Cox's Bazar Districts. As a ruling race the Arakanese could settle wherever they liked. The *Maharadzawang* gives an instance of the Arakanese immigration in Chittagong during the troubled years following the death of king Thiri Thudhamma (1638 A D).⁴

¹ *Political consultation*, no. 14, April 25, 1794. In Burmese language it is known as Bo Min Gyi which means governor of a province.

² *H J.*, p. 729; also see *supra*, p. 97

³ See *Infra*. ch xiv, see 3. The word Magh is allied to Sanskrit Magha meaning the superior. Maug meaning husband in Chittagong dialect may have connexion with Arakanese maung. The name Magh is invariably applied to both Arakanese and Bengalee Buddhists (see the article S V Mugg in *H J*)

⁴ Referring to the *Arakanese Chronicle*, O' Malley writes: "During these troubled times, the son of Sri Sudharma (Thiri Thudhamma), Nga Tun Khin made his escape from the town and lived in the wilderness; and certain members of the royal family and other nobles left for Kantha, a place in Chittagong and settled down there. Of the 100,000 guards who were stationed in Myohammy, 50,000 deserted the king and left

Buddhism receives a secure place in the neighbouring countries. Burma rose into prominence as the seat of Buddhism and it was revived also in Chittagong. Buddhist images for the temples and monasteries of Chittagong began to be shaped in Burma instead of eastern India. A colossal image of Lord Buddha¹ has been unearthed in the Rangmahal Hills. Two images of Lord Buddha were dug up in the island of Maheshkhali in the middle of the last century.² The Burman style of sculpture is evident on these images. A number of temples and stupas built during the Arakanese regime are seen all over southern Chittagong.

A large number of dighis or reservoirs owe their excavation to the Arakanese period. Noteworthy among them is 'Thakurer Dighi' in the Satkania u. z. on the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway. Ruins of a Magh temple still exist on its northern bank. Traces of Magh homesteads (bhita) are still seen all over the district especially the tract lying to the south of the Karnaphuli.

Many of the placenames of Chittagong are of Arakanese origin. For instance, 'que' as an Arakanese term meaning cow, is found attached to Quepara (in Raozan); similarly, 'noa' means buffalo, and hence Noapara, Noabila and so on. 'Lambu' is a designation of an Arakanese chief and hats or markets in Rangunia and Satkania u. z. are named after such officers. 'Roaza' was also an important administrative post under the Arakanese and Roaza hat, a market in Rangunia u. z. commemorates one of the Roazas. Kolagaon in Patiya u. z. has been the name of a geon or vill-

the capital, taking with them Nga Lut Roon, who was then priest, and settled down in Kantha under Nga Tun Khin. Then the Katas called the governor of Kantha the king of Mramagri." (O'Malley, *op. cit.*, p. 67). This Kantha, the place of refuge of the Arakanese can be identified with a village of the same name in Kachuai Union under Patiya u. z.

¹ J B T R S, VII (1905), 4. The image which was found out in 1904 is preserved in the city Buddhist temple.

² Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 154

age of the Kola, an Arakanese term meaning Muslim (foreigners as well) since medieval times. The village Karangiri in Patiya u. z. is named after one Karamkari, a high ranking Arakanese military officer during the Arakanese regime. The name of the village Rosangiri in Fetikchhari u. z. originates in Rosang, Bengali version of Rakhaing or Arakan.¹ Mulk-i-Chhwang (popularly Mallik Chwang) in Satkania u. z. is probably the relic of the territory of one Chhwang (? Changa of Manrique's account), the holder of an Arakanese administrative post. Other placenames such as Maghdia (Mirsarai), Maghdhara (Sandwip), Maghnama (Chakaria), Palong (Ukhia), Harbang (Chakaria), Ringbang (do), Ukhia, Whykong, Nhila, Subarang (Teknaf) and many other placenames are obviously either the Arakanese names of the places or the names attached to the Arakanese period. Above all, the name of the district is said to have been derived from an Arakanese pillar inscription of the tenth century A D.²

Not only the names of the places but some Burman terms for example, Phora (Lord Buddha), kyang (temple, 'kioum' in the 18th century British writings), phungi (priest), Rauli (clergy) and words of such kind had made their way into the common use of Chittagong dialect.

The Arakanese influence on dress, food, social customs etc. is also noticeable. The 'lungi',³ the familiar home dress of the malefolk of Chittagong is thought to be an Arakanese gift. The Muslim women in rural area still wear two pieces of cloth like their Arakanese sisters. The upper portion is known as 'doma', and the lower part is known as 'thami'. The names of the costumes are Arakanese no doubt, but the method of wearing them is in no sense native of Arakan. Babur's autobiography, the Rajput and Kangra paintings have evidences of the two pieces of cloth

¹ A R, V (1808), 223

² See *supra*, p. 17

³ The *Ain* mentions 'lung' or a cloth round the loins (vol. iii, p. 293)

being used to be worn by the Indian women during the medi-eval period. The Arakanese might have borrowed this practice from the subcontinent and afterwards transmitted it to Chittagong. So, the supposition that the practice of wearing two pieces of cloth originated in Arakan has no foundation. Moreover, with the Burmanization of Arakan, the latter gave up this practice.

The Arakanese Era or the Maghi Era was once widely prevalent in Chittagong before the introduction of the Christian Era by the British government. Though the Al Hegirah and the Bengali Era were in vogue, the Arakanese Era was by far the most poplular till the end of the nineteenth century.

Section 5. Remnants of the Tripura Contact with Chittagong

Throughout the sixteenth century, the Tripuras entered into a deadly conflict with their neighbours for holding the possession of Chittagong. With the objective of conquering the province, they made raids on Chittagong time and again and their invasions were on many occasions crowned with success. It is a fact that such powerful Tripura kings as Dhanyamanikya and Bijoymanikya could overrun the district from end to end; but their hold on Chittagong, except a decade of the Tripura rule under Bijoymanikya lasted for a very brief time. They, however, succeeded during the Afghan rule, in holding a portion of northern Chittagong under their occupation. Among the three contending powers (viz., Bengal, Arakan, and Tripura) for the lordship over the district it seems that Tripura with her strength undermined before that of Bengal and Arakan could not make her position of overlordship a lasting one.

Surviving trace of the Tripura occupation of Chittagong is a vivid spectacle even today. There are still some Tripuras residing in the Fatikchhari u. z. and on the borderline between Chittagong and Tripura.

Like other Hindu rulers of Bengal, the Tripura kings used to commemorate their accomplishments by philanthropic works such

as constructing temples, digging large tanks in the conquered provinces and so on. The so-called Tripurar dighi near Chittagong town¹ and in Karaldenga village (Boalkhali u. z.) are supposed to be the remnants of the Tripura rule over Chittagong. The bottom of the latter tank has dried up to such an extent that it has been converted into cultivable land. Only the ruined embankment can be seen at present. It can not be said with any degree of certainty, who among the Tripura kings dug those tanks. The *Rajamala* states that king Dhanyamanikya ordered a tank to be excavated near Arakan. The identification of this tank with the Tripurar dighi in the village Karaldenga is of course a subject of conjecture. The village named Tripura Subaidari in the Raojan u. z. and the Tripura jangal² near the town may have relation to the Tripura rule. The hill-range named 'Ghongimurha' in the Cox's Bazar District commemorates the disastrous retreat of Tripura soldiers from Arakan during Amaramanikya's rule.³

Some Tripura colloquial terms such as murha(hills), tangi (platform supported and made with bamboos and woods) have found access to the Chittagong dialect.

The most remarkable trace of the Tripura architectural activities in Chittagong in the late medieval period is the Chandranatha temple in Sitakunda. The Chandranatha temple on the peak of the hill, was built by Govindamanikya, the pious Tripura monarch who lived in Chittagong for some time as an exile, following a palace revolution. After his restoration to the throne, he built a temple on the Chandranatha Hill and excavated a tank near it.⁴ The base of the Lingam that was destroyed by the miscreants later on, still exists. architectural style of Sitakunda-Chandranatha temple complex has close relation to that of Tripura-Comilla region.

¹ *Tarikh*, p. 16

² *Ibid.*

³ See *supra*, p. 236

⁴ চট্টলেতে চন্দ্রশেখর মঠ নিরমিয়া।
দেবার্থেতে মহারাজা জলাশয় দিয়া।।

Appendix I. Prince Shuja's Sojourn in Chittagong and the Historiocity of the so-called Shuja Road

Prince Shuja, the luckless aspirant to the throne of Delhi was defeated in the war of succession and deposed from the subahdarship of Bengal. The pursuing imperial army under Mir Jumla, his successor, compelled the frustrated prince, according to the *Alamgirnamah* to bid Hindustan farewell on the sixth Ramzan, 1070 A H (the sixth May, 1660 A D).¹

The identity of the route taken by the fugitive prince in getting from starting point to destination, has not been satisfactorily established so far. Almost all the contemporary sources hold that Shah Shuja and his party left by ship from Dhaka on his way to Arakan. According to the *Alamgirnamah*, "on the following day after starting towards Arakan, they met on the way a number of warboats of Arakanese and Portuguese sent by the governor of Chittagong to assist Shah Shuja and his party under the orders of the king of Arakan."² Khafi Khan says that, "(the prince) loaded two boats with his personal effects, vessels of gold and silver, jewels, treasure and other appendages of royalty."³ Both Bernier and Manucci hold that the prince was conveyed in boats, rowed by the Portuguese sailors. According to Manucci's

¹ The flight of Shuja and the subsequent events have been elaborately discussed by Mr Siddiq Khan in his commendable article in the *J A S P*, IX (1966), 195-254.

² A N, pp. 556-562

³ E D, VII, 254

narrative, the prince was robbed of all the treasures and jewellery by the Portuguese pirates on the coast of Arakan.¹ The event of the Portuguese plundering of Shuja's wealth is quite possible as Patenga, Diang and some other places on the Chittagong coast at that time were the notorious bases of the Portuguese plundering operations. The contemporary English factor's reports give a passing but corroborative reference to Prince Shuja's sea journey to Chittagong. It states: "About the latter end of August ...he (Shuja)fled by boat and gott to a frontier fort of the king of Arrackans."² This 'frontier post' was identical with either Diang or Chittagong. The reports of both the English and the Dutch factors definitely state that the prince was brought from Bengal to Diang by the armada of the king of Arakan.

But a sizeable body of opinion belonging to the latter period holds that the route taken by Shuja was mainly overland through the hills and jungles of Tripura and Chittagong. According to the author of the *Riyaz us Salatin*, "Sultan Shuja with a number of followers took the road to Assam, and from thence proceeded to (Arakan)."³ Charles Stewart, following *Riyaz*, writes that, "having entered the wild mountains of Tippera, after a long and wearisome journey, he reached Chittagong."⁴ Alexander Dow states: "Having made a circuit of near five hundred miles through the wild mountains of Tippera, he entered Arracan with a diminished retinue."⁵ These narratives are supported by some other eminent authorities such as Sir A P Phayre,⁶ L S S O' Malley⁷ and others. With all

¹ Manucci, I, 370

² E F I (1665 1667), p. 531

³ *Riyaz*, p. 222

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 313

⁵ *Op. cit.*, III, 327

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 178

⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 31

our esteem to their authority, we regret our inability to accept the opinions of these historians, who especially Stewart and Dow dilate upon at some length on the land journey of Prince Shuja through Tripura and northern Chittagong. Considering the hot persuasion by Mir Jumla and the consequent hurry and excitement on the part of the fugitive prince to find out a secure place of refuge, we are inclined to accept the narratives of the contemporary source books, most of which relate the Prince's hurried seajourney from Dhaka to Chittagong. In this connexion it may be stated that the so-called Shuja Road exists in southern Chittagong and no such road is known to have existed in Tripura, Noakhali and northern Chittagong. However, the possibility of land journey undertaken by the major portion of Shuja's companions through Tripura (Comilla) Noakhali region cannot be ruled out.

On Prince Shuja's sojourn at Chittagong, almost all the sources, contemporary as well as later, are in agreement. But the information regarding the Prince's temporary residence at Chittagong and the second stage of his flight is so meagre that to form a clear idea of these events is difficult. The *Alamgirnamah* does not say anything noteworthy about these but only refers to Shuja's "passing through difficult days and hazardous routes" after which he arrived at "the island of Arakan."

By far, the most authoritative contemporary account regarding the Prince's memorable flight is supplied by the *Daghregister* or the Dutch account of the trade and commerce of their factories in the East Indies. The *Daghregister* of 1661 A D contains three lengthy letters from Gerrit Van Voorburg, the chief Dutch factor at Mrohaung, collecting all the news of Shah Shuja which he could glean. His story is that Shah Shuja was brought from Bengal to Diang, a port on the river bank opposite to Chittagong on board the king of Arakan's armada (fleet). He arrived there on June 3, 1660 A D. From thence he arrived at the capital on the twenty sixth August¹ Unfortunately, the full details of the Dutch

¹ *J Bur. R S*, XXVI (1936), 88

source are not at our disposal. But it does not basically differ much from the English Factor's reports, *Alamgirnamah*, and accounts of the contemporary travellers such as Bernier and Manucci. Almost all the contemporary authorities tell the prince's temporary residence at Chittagong.

About the Prince's activities during his brief staying in Chittagong, the contemporary historians say practically nothing. Khafi Khan writes that the Prince "conceived the idea of occupying one of the fortresses on the frontiers of the Raja of Rakhang."¹ The evidence of Khafi Khan may give rise to a suspicion that Prince Shuja might have in his mind a design to occupy either Chittagong or the kingdom of Arakan as a whole and to make it a base of his activities against his brother. Khafi Khan's statement is indirectly supported by the *Alamgirnamah*, according to which, the prince made "an abortive attempt to take the fort of Bhalua" earlier on his journey to Arakan. So Khafi Khan's statement of the Prince's project of seizing Chittagong has a foundation. However, the project even if the Prince had any, could never have been materialized.

The local tradition and folk poems supply evidence of the Prince's sojourn in Chittagong. According to the local traditions, the Prince offered his prayer somewhere near the dargah of Pir Badr Shah, situated on a hill top at the heart of the city. A local ballad, named *Pari Banur Hanhala* narrates that the Prince paid a pious visit to the holy shrine of Pir Badr and generously distributed alms to the deserving.² The existence of the dargah of the famous Pir on the top of a hill in the city is conspicuously stated by Shihabuddin Talish. Therefore, the accounts narrated by the tradition and the ballad have a definite foundation to believe.

¹ E D, VII, 254

² চাউগাঁতে আসি তার। বদরের মোকাম।

বহুত খয়রাত দিলা সোনা ভরি ভরি।।

—'Pari Banur Hanhala',
qt *Purba Banga Gitika* ed. D C Sen, pt iv, no. 2, p. 456

The cause of the Prince's departure from Chittagong¹ is not far to seek. First, a place like Chittagong could not serve as a base of operations against the mighty Mughal Empire. Secondly, he must have heard the news of the progress of Mir Jumla, who was directed by the Emperor Aurangzib to pursue him. Thirdly, the Arabia bound vessels were either unavailable at the port at that time or the sails dared not venture to undertake a journey to the Arab ports in the season of monsoon and cyclone. These circumstances, either jointly or severally induced the Prince to fix up his mind to leave Chittagong and to make a journey to Arakan.

The local ballads state that Shah Shuja was accompanied by his wife Pari Banu and his two daughters on his journey to Arakan.² The name of the Begum (Shah Shuja's second wife) as Pearee or Piara Banu has been mentioned by Dow³ and Beale,⁴ The daughters of Shah Shuja are named as Gulrukh Banu, the eldest princess (probably she did not accompany the fugitive party), Raushan Ara Begum, the second princess; the third princess was named Amena Banu.⁵ A contemporary manuscript of the *Arakanese Chronicle* mentions in the party, a sister of Shuja named Sabe Bee (? Sabeha Bai).⁶

The contemporary sources do not agree on the number and names of the sons of Shah Shuja who joined him. The *Alam-girnamah* specifically mentions Zainuddin, Buland Akhtar and Zainal Abedin though it does not say who among the princes actually

1 নসীবের লেখা কড় না যায় খন্ডন।

চাউগা ছাড়াতে বাদশাহ করিল মনন।।

—*Ibid.*, p. 457

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Op. cit.*, pp. 326-327

4 T W Beale, *An Oriental Biographical Dictionary*, p. 271

5 The genuineness of the characters has been discussed by Mr Siddiq Khan in the *J A S P*, XI (1966), 206

6 *Ibid.*

accompanied Shah Shuja. Bernier, Manucci, and Bawrey mention Sultan Bang (also spelt as Bank, Banque, or Bon) as Shuja's son whose active role in this event has been related at some length by these sources. Gerrit Van Voorburg, the Dutch chief factor at Mrauk-U mentions 'Bon Sultan' as the eldest son, in a letter to the headquarters at Batavia.

At that time, there was a well known public road from Chittagong to the capital of Arakan, the description of which is given by the European travellers.¹ Prince Shuja might have used this road in his journey to Arakan. This road, subsequently called Shuja Road, originates from the left bank of the river Karnaphuli, passes through Diang (or Bundar), Anwara, and then after crossing the river Sankha at Chandpur, it meets the Arakan Road near Satkania. Rennell's map shows only one track from this point to Ramu, which roughly corresponds to the modern Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway. This part of the road runs either through the hills or parallel to the hill ranges. Local tradition ascribes the name of Dulahazara to Shuja's respite for few hours with the thousand palanquins carrying the harem ladies. Eidgong was named as such because the Prince performed his Eid prayer at that place. Both Stewart² and Phayre³ hold the view that the Prince and his party crossed the river Naaf on their journey to Arakan. But they do not say on which point they crossed the river. The route by way of Teknaf is mountainous and extremely hazardous. The local ballads narrate that the Prince had undertaken land journey of thirteen days and thirteen nights with a troubled mind in the strange land before he reached the seashore.

¹ See Supra, p. 288

² *Op. cit.*, p. 313

³ Phayre writes: "From thence (Chittagong) they travelled through a difficult country to the Naaf River; crossing which they entered Arakan, and arrived at the capital about the end of the year 1660." (*Op. cit.*, p. 178)

Here he made a halt for three days,¹ in order to take rest. On the fourth day, he undertook the sea journey and finally reached the Arakanese capital. The fate of the Prince after his arrival at the capital of Arakan can be known from various sources. It is almost unanimously supposed that he along with his family was brutally murdered by the Arakanese king.² Shuja's tragic end may remind anybody of the transitoriness of the worldly power and glory, but the road used by him still commemorates his unfortunate flight.

¹ *P B G*, pt IV, no. 2, p. 456

² *Bernier*, pp. 113-115

Appendix 2. Father Manrique's Journey from Diang to Arakan

Father Manrique came to Chittagong on September 25, 1629 A D to conduct missionary activities. An unavoidable circumstance¹ compelled him to undertake a journey from Diang to the Arakanese capital. The interesting details of the journey through southern Chittagong narrated by the traveller have been summarized below.

On July 2, 1630, the day of the Christian festival of 'the Visitation of the Mother of God', Manrique and his companions, 'in the Silence of night', embarked on a 'gelia' "mounted by powerful rowers". It seems that they were sailing along a route close to the coast. Shortly afterwards, their craft passed "along a narrow, boiling river" which appears to be the Kutubdia Channel. Soon after they sailed "across the mouths of several streams and arms of the sea." What appears "the mouths of several streams" to our traveller is but the several mouths of the Matamuhuri. Manrique states that it was "all dangerous to navigate" in the monsoon months,² "which are very tempestuous specially along the coast." On the third day

¹ Manrique, I. 92

² Manrique took the time wrongly to be winter. The fall of temperature as a result of heavy rain and cyclonic weather might give rise to our traveller's mind suspicion of winter weather. He is not, however, wrong to mention the time, "a season of heavy rain and storms" (Manrique, I, 93). It should further be noted that his native land, the Iberian Peninsula belong to the Mediterranean climate which is characterized by both summer and winter precipitation.

of their journey, they "reached the city of Ramu just at the hour when Night was spreading her sabre mantle over the earth, accompanied by heavy rainladen clouds which discharged their watery produce" giving them "no opportunity of landing". Probably the traveller at this stage undertook a river journey through the Bak-khali on which the city of Ramu stands about ten miles in the interior part of the country. The stormy weather prevented them from landing and they were "obliged to pass the night in the gelia." Next day (the sixth July), at dawn they disembarked and went straight to governor's residence to pay a visit to his person. There he was received by the governor "with every show of courtesy and kindness" and he stayed at a residence as an honoured guest for the day and the next. In reply to the governor's asking him about "what road (they) propose to travel", Manrique replied that "the route along the river bank would be the easiest." But an enquiry revealed that "it was quite out of the question, as owing to heavy rain the streams from the hills were coming down in such volume and forming such violent water courses that even Elephants could not ford them." They were advised to proceed on by the land route. On July 7, they resumed their journey. They were given help of men and beasts of burden. The whole party, according to his estimate, consisted of eighty-three heads of persons. "As it was raining" they "decided to go in a covered boat over the two leagues upstream to the foot of the mountains." It is likely that Manrique and his party taking advantage of the river course of the Bak-khali moved inland as far as Garjanía, possibly the last limit of the navigability of the river. There they had "to wait over an hour until the elephants came up." The elephants, were equipped with 'howdah', "fully furnished with mattresses, rugs, and cushions and well closed in with wax-cloth above and curtains on the sides." On July 8, when they were about to start their inland journey, a man was carried off by "a fierce tiger, as large as a young bull." After a while, the victim was rescued with severe injuries in his body." The forest track was so hazardous that they had to pass it with guns in hands, "occasionally firing a shot, in order to scare

wild animals off the road." Soaked by heavy rain and "experiencing great difficulty owing to the continuous rain and thick mud" they reached a "cultivated opening" (the plainland between the two hill ranges) at about 4 O'clock. They did not dare to traverse the vast extent of marsh on that day. Manrique measures its breadth to be two leagues. They encamped at the foot of a tree for the night. On that night they were lashed by "a furious wind", which badly damaged the howdahs. Next day, the tenth July, they resumed their journey but soon found themselves "exposed to the inclemency of the weather. They were so much steeped in heavy downpouer that they were 'obliged to take off their clothes and in the lightest of attire face the rain'". At night, the rain ceased and they took rest on the top of the mountain. Next day, in the very early hours of the morning, they descended the mountain and reached the foot hills. There they found some deserted huts which provided an welcome shelter to them. The prophecy that morning shows the day does not always hold good especially in the rainy months of this region. The fine weather of the morning turned dismal at eleven o'clock and the party thought it wise of staying there for the whole day and night. On the morning of July 12, they reached the base of another range. This range has been identified by the editors of the Travels as Tha-la-daung mountains which form the watershed between Arakan-Chittagong and Assam tracts, linking up with the Sinedun Range. At the base of the Tha-la-daung mountains they were checked by a stream, evidently a part of the Naaf River system, probably its tributary, the Myo-ke-chaung. On July 17, they crossed the Pora's Range and reached Peroem City at night. From there the missionary traveller started his final stage of his journey through Arakan proper,

The route chosen by Manrique in preference to other routes, is not difficult to guess. The land route from Diang to the Arakanese capital, according to the estimate of Manrique is ninety leagues long. It usually takes twelve days for a fast runner to cover the distance of "rough mountainous country and heavy

swamps." In all, there were as many as three routes used by the travellers from Chittagong to Arakan at that time. One was the sea route from Diang or Chittagong direct to Mrauk-U (Mrohaung), which took according to Manrique, only 'a few days'. This was used by Manrique in his return journey from Arakan to Chittagong. The second was the land route from Chittagong via Ramu and Teknaf which was probably used by Prince Shuja in his tragic flight to Arakan. The third route and the most hazardous was that used by our esteemed traveller. Manrique undertook his mission to Arakan to pacify the king and to refrain him from sending marine forces to uproot the Portuguese of Chittagong. In this mission he must have thought that the advice and assistance of the governors of the principalities through which he had his way, were necessary in influencing the Arakanese sovereign. He was successful in the conduct of negotiations with the governors of the cities of Ramu, Peroem etc.

To Be Continue.....